Pageant of Indian Art



MARG PUBLICATIONS

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A collage of sculpture, painting, craft, music and dance metamorphoses into the most dynamic manifestation of India's cultural past and present ever held abroad.

Over a period of several months, the Festival of India displayed a cultural representation as yet unprecedented in terms of quality and innovation, inviting the attention of thousands. An indisputable success in the artistic sphere, the Festival also served another purpose: to bridge the gap between two vastly different cultures. It brought a new awareness of India to the British youth and, most significantly, it instilled a definite sense of pride and of heritage in those of Indian origin.

In this volume Marg leads you down the ever-fluctuating path of Continuity and Change, projecting the concept of the Festival in collaboration with many of those who were intimately involved in its presentation. Illustrated manuscripts, sculptures and paintings assume a life of their own, lending an element of adventure to the exploration of the Indian experience.

In the sculptured forms the inclination of the head, the undulating curve of the cheek, a soulful expression transcend artistic expectation. In a chiselled moment of truth, the image of the Mother Goddess crystallises a universal concept with a beauty and tenderness that defy description. Motionless stand the various iconic forms of Hindu gods that inspired the classical Sanskrit poets. Seated in the lotus position, the Buddha silently reflects upon the mysteries of life. These are the forms merging to express the Indian sense of the Cosmos.

Yet another manifestation of India has evolved from the Islamic era. As a guest of the Mughal emperors, you stand in awe amidst the splendour of their courts. Richly decorative artefacts and paintings epitomise the grace, wealth, power and magic of the Mughal empire. Superbly illustrated manuscripts capture the myths and histories of the age.

India's past is closely linked to its present and Marg also guides you through contemporary India where today's artisans recount legendary tales with handcrafted marionettes, or practise traditional crafts imbibed from their forefathers. Shafts of light emanate from the golden threads in cascades of many-hued fabrics woven by the dexterous fingers of the Master Weavers.

Marg is the only publication that provides a comprehensive overview of the many aspects of the Festival of India. It effectively recreates the spirit of the Festival, preserving the aura of antiquity and combining the freshness of expression integral to the India of today.

Cover: Rama and the exiles return home in triumph to Ayodhya
From the *Yuddhakanda*, the sixth book of the *Ramayana* prepared for Jagat Singh of Mewar, and dated 1652. The artist is named in the colophon as Sahib Din.
f. 202; Folio 23 x 39 cms.
British Library, London.
Courtesy, J. P. Losty, British Library, London.

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A DIVISION OF TATA SONS LIMITED

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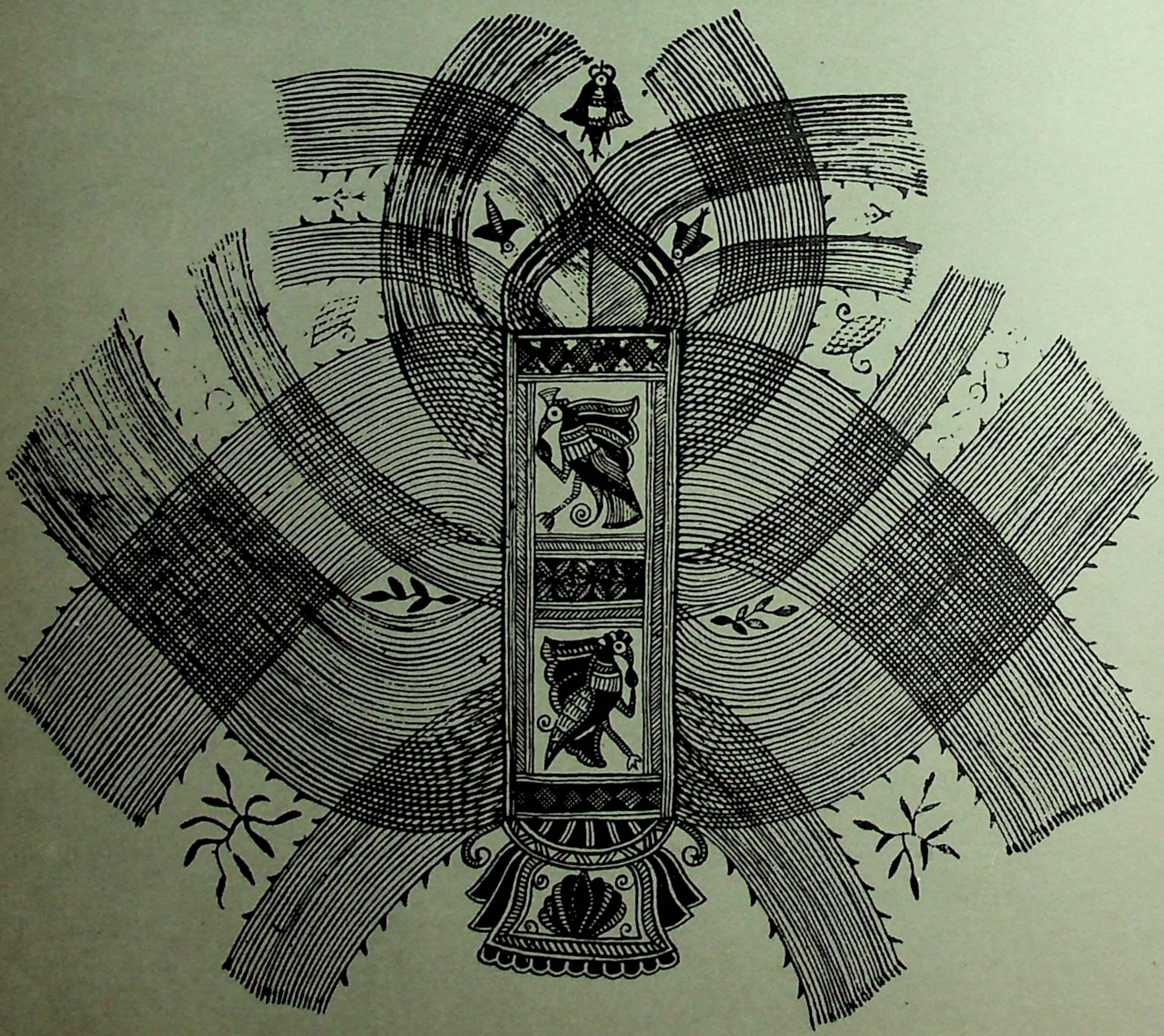
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Pageant of Indian Art

Festival of India in Great Britain

Editor: Dr. Saryu Doshi

MARG PUBLICATIONS



Courtesy, Lance Dane

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Printed by M. N. Palwankar at the Tata Press Limited, Bombay 400 025.
Printed in India.

सत्यमेव जयते

PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE

The splendour and variety of India's cultural heritage was beautifully demonstrated in the Festival of India in Britain last year. So popular was the Festival and so dramatic its impact that there are now demands for similar festivals in other countries.

The range of our cultural tradition is vast and even in our own country there are many who are ignorant of its different aspects. Giving the entire sweep of the Festival in one volume will be useful to Indians as also people abroad.

My good wishes to MARG magazine for its Festival of India issue.

(Indira Gandhi)

New Delhi
May 17, 1983

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

The Festival of India was a memorable and inspiring event. Its resounding success was a worthy tribute to the richness and vigour of Indian art and culture and to the interest and enthusiasm they excite in both India and Britain.

The experience has refreshed our knowledge of India's heritage and achievements and has brought them to the attention of a new generation. I welcome the efforts of Marg Publications to produce a lasting record of the Festival.

Margaret Thatcher

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Festival of India

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The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP

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Shri E. Gonsalves
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Shri B. B. Lal
Shri Abid Hussain
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Shri Rajeev Sethi
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Mr. Tom Petzal (Co-ordinator)



Programme of Events

The Festival of India, which took place between March 22 and November 14, 1982, included major events and exhibitions planned by official committees in Britain and India, a series of associated events, co-ordinated by the Committee of Indian Associations and Artists resident in Britain, an educational programme, and many other events and exhibitions presented by British stores, galleries, theatres and other organisations who wished to participate in the largest Indian Festival held in Britain since India's independence.

(Official events are shown in capitals)

March 22

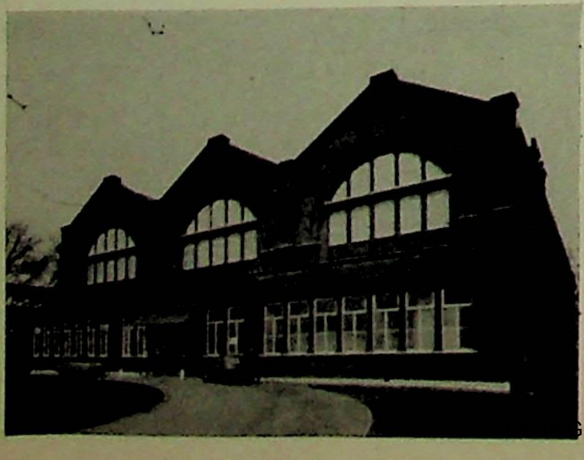
Inaugural Concert at the Royal Festival Hall, Belvedere Road, London SE1

The Inaugural Concert was attended by HRH The Prince of Wales and the joint patrons of the Festival of India, the Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher MP, and the Hon. Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi. The concert included the European premiere of Ravi Shankar's second concerto for sitar and orchestra and songs by the distinguished singer M. Subbulakshmi. Zubin Mehta conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

March

March 24-April 25
Indian Monuments through British Eyes 1780-1980
Adeane Gallery, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
A selection of aquatints of Indian monuments by Daniells and other artists, drawn from a distinguished Cambridge collection, also photographs, often of the same monuments, made during the past two decades.
The exhibition aimed to reveal something of the splendour and range of India's monuments and sculptures in their natural settings, and of their changing environment.

March 17-May 30
Indian Playing Cards
From the Victoria & Albert Museum's Collection Bethnal Green Museum, Cambridge Heath Road, London E2. An exhibition of Indian playing cards, dating back to the 16th century. Packs of cards made from starched cotton, paper, metal and ivory, handpainted with such suit symbols as animals, cushions or mythological characters, were on display, together with information on Mughal and Hindu card games.



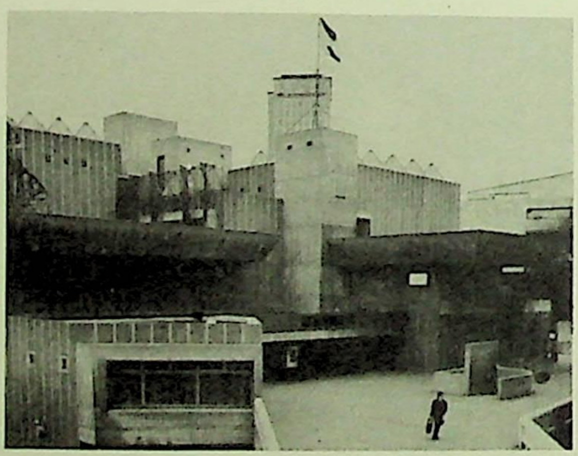
The Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green

March 23-August
FESTIVAL OF INDIAN FILMS
National Film Theatre, South Bank, London SE1
The epic silent movie 'Kaliya Mardan', by the father of the Indian cinema D. G. Phalke, opened the Festival of Indian Films, and continued in March with two other silent films. All silent films had a live accompaniment by an Indian Orchestra.
A series of retrospectives followed on directors involved in the development of the new Indian cinema, including Ritwick Ghatak and Satyajit Ray.

March 23-May 29
SEE-INDIA: Travelling Exhibition
Selfridges, Oxford Street, London W1
"See-India" exhibition was launched in Selfridges and then travelled around the country. The promotion centrepiece was an exhibition of the fabulous treasures of the Maharajah of Jaipur. The atmosphere of India was recreated by photographs, and displays of Indian merchandise in pavilions decorated like bazaars. Performances by Indian dancers, singers and acrobats were given.

March 25-August 1
SCIENCE IN INDIA
Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7
The history of the developemt of science in India, from the indigenous science of ancient India to the application of science in the fields of space, research, nuclear power, agriculture and medicine today. The exhibits ranged from Hindu mathematical manuscripts to a prototype of the APPLE telecommunications satellite and SLV3 rocket.

March 25-June 13
IN THE IMAGE OF MAN
Hayward Gallery, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London SE1
In the Image of Man gathered together 500 works of Indian art spanning 2,000 years. Two-thirds of the paintings and sculptures came from Indian collections, including the archaelogical site museums of the great temples and stupas like Khajuraho, Konarak and Sanchi. It was organised around the dominant themes relating to all the principal religions of India—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Islam.



The Hayward Gallery

March 30-April 30
17th-19th Century Indian Paintings
Tooth Paintings, 33 Cork Street, London W1
Latest in a series of annual exhibitions devoted to Indian paintings of the 17th-19th century, included examples from Rajasthan, the Punjab Hills and the Deccan, with special emphasis on works depiciting the country life of the Rajput states of Mewar, Kishangarh and Kotah, and of the Pahari states of Kangra and Guler.

April

April onwards
Indian Miniatures
Maggs Bros. Ltd., 50 Berkeley Square, London W1
An exhibition of miniatures by Mughal artists from 16th to 19th century and books on Indian Art.

April 1-April 30
Indian Painting 1525-1825
David Carritt Limited, 15 Duke Street, St. James's, London SW1
An Artemis Group exhibition of Mughal, Deccani, Rajput and Pahari paintings, covering a period of three centuries. Most of the exhibits were for sale, but a few were loans from private collections.

April 1-May 1
Liberty's Little India
Liberty & Co. Ltd., Regent Street, London W1
Exotic spices, silks, jewellery, textiles and wedding clothes from the Rajasthan area of India were featured.

April 5-18
George Chinnery Paintings
Martyn Gregory Gallery, 34 Bury Street, St. James's, London SW1
Landscapes and scenes.

April 6-April 23
2,000 Years of Indian Art
Thomas and William Prinsep
Spink & Son Ltd., King Street, St. James's, London SW1
Over 150 sculptures, bronzes, paintings and other works of art, dating back more than 2,000 years were on view and for sale. The history and development of artistic style in India was followed through Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim arts.
Running concurrently was an exhibition of water-colours and drawings of India and the Far East by William and Thomas Prinsep, covering the period from the 1820's to 1850's, and providing a fascinating insight into the British way of life at that time, in India.

April 6-April 24
Paintings and Sculptures from India
Colnaghi Oriental, Michael Goedhuis Ltd.,
14 Old Bond Street, London W1
An exhibition incorporating paintings and works of art made for Mughal and Hindu princes throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, together with a select group of important Buddhist and Hindu temple sculptures. All items exhibited were for sale.

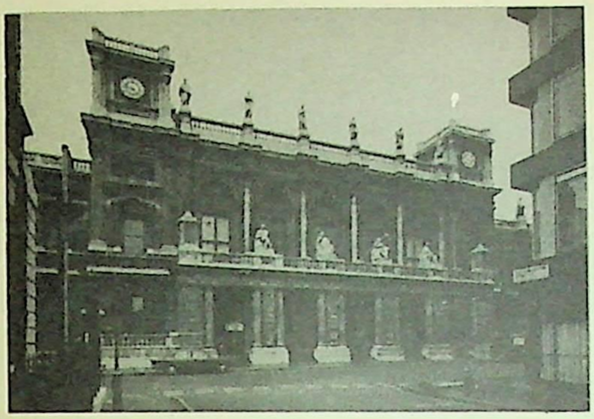
April 7-May 23
MODERN INDIAN ARTISTS
Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1
An exhibition of modern Indian painting, chosen by the painter Howard Hodgkin, which included the work of three contemporary painters, M.F. Husain, Bhupen Khakhar and K.G. Subramanyan. Also some early 20th century artists, including Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy and Amrita Sher-Gil.



The Tate Gallery

April 10-May 9
Images of India: 19th Century Photographs
Graves Art Gallery, Surrey Street, Sheffield
Photographs selected from a private collection, reflecting life in India (and Sri Lanka), during the 19th century, were on display. Works by such photographers as Julia Margaret Cameron and Samuel Bourne, included landscape, architecture, fakirs, maharajahs, trade and natural disasters.

April 20 onwards
VASNA: INSIDE AN INDIAN VILLAGE
Museum of Mankind, Burlington Gardens, London W1
The Museum created a village, typical of central Gujarat, India's western-most state. Vasna was presented as a three dimensional reconstruction with a weaver's home, potter's workshop and many artefacts of village life.



Museum of Mankind

April 13-May 23
DESIGN IN INDIA
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
This exhibition, devised by the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, traced the historical development of modern Indian design in the fields of industry, transport, consumer goods, graphics and architecture since the early 1940's.

April 14-May 14
Folk Textiles from Chamba, Bengal and Western India
Joss Graham, 10 Eccleston Street, London SW1
Joss Graham and Lisbet Holmes spent several years travelling in India, collecting examples of folk textiles. Their show included Chamba, Bengal and western Indian textiles from the 18th-20th century.

April 15-April 30
Photographs of India by Derry Moore
Eyre & Hobhouse Gallery, Duke Street, St. James's, London SW1
An exhibition of photographs by a contemporary English architectural photographer, who has travelled in India since 1976, included interiors, portraits and buildings in Hyderabad, Lucknow and Calcutta.

April 16-Aug 1
ART OF THE BOOK IN INDIA
British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1
The exhibition covering 2,000 years explored the concepts governing book materials and book illustrations in India. Exhibited were writing materials including palm leaves and sheets of bark for normal use, as well as sheets of gold, silver and ivory, used for special occasions and illustrated manuscripts produced for princes and emperors.

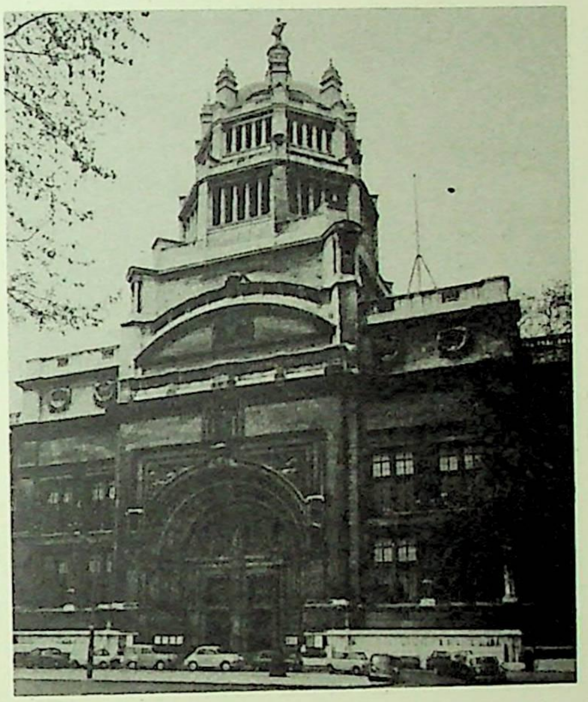


The British Library

April 19
The Green Revolution in India
The Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7
Lecture given by Dr. B.H. Farmer of the Cambridge Institute of South Asian Studies, was held at the Royal Geographical Society.

April 21-April 22
"After Eames"
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
This seminar, with designers from both countries, had been organised to co-incide with the DESIGN IN INDIA exhibition. Designers from India and the UK discussed design perspectives in a workshop setting.

April 21-Aug 15
THE INDIAN HERITAGE: Court Life & Arts Under Mughal Rule
Victoria & Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7
This exhibition recaptured the spectacular opulence of 16th and 17th century court life of the 'Grand Mogul', with the aid of textiles, jewels, decorative arts and paintings. It also provided some insight into life at court under the Emperors themselves, the Maharajahs of Hindu India, and the Nawabs who rose to power in the 18th century.



The Victoria and Albert Museum

April 23
FROM VILLAGE TO CITY IN ANCIENT INDIA
British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1
This exhibition traced the growth and development of settlement-life and culture in India, beginning with simple villages of the neolithic period and ending with the Buddhist universities of the 10th century A.D. in eastern India.

April 23-April 24
Indian Theatre Workshop
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
This workshop on traditional and contemporary Indian theatre, was led by the distinguished Indian scholar Kirti Jain.

April 23-May 9
Crafts of Bengal
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
Craftsmen demonstrated their skills in making the traditional products of the region, including sitars, conch-shell artefacts, metal sculptures and wood carvings, which were also for sale. In addition, the work of the Bengali painter Jamini Roy and sculptor Mira Mukherjee were on view. Suhrid Bhowmick demonstrated his skills on Patua art.

April 26-27, June 21
Sotheby's Sale
34-35 New Bond Street, W1
Exhibition and sale of Indian and Islamic miniatures and manuscripts.

April 26-July 4
INDIA OBSERVED
Victoria & Albert Museum, Room 74, Cromwell Road, London SW7
In the first exhibition of its kind, the theme was the landscape, monuments and people of India, as seen by British artists, professional and amateur, between 1760 and 1860, and expressed in paintings, drawings and book plates, still largely unknown.

April 27-June 6
A Festival of Indian Textiles
Oxfordshire County Museum, Woodstock, Oxfordshire
Joss Graham and One Village presented traditional textiles and household objects from the great Indian desert.

May

May 8-31
Krishna Consciousness Society
Paintings and Lectures at Watford Central Library, May 8-16
Drama and Music at Watford Central Shopping Precinct, May 15
Cultural Evening at Watford Town Hall, May 20
Exhibition of Paintings at West Midlands Arts Centre, May 24-31 Chariot Festival at Sparkhill, Birmingham, May 29.

May 4-July 31
Medicine and Science in India
The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1
Manuscripts on the indigenous science of India, in Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit, dating back to the 16th century, were on display, together with material covering the establishment of western science up to the early 20th century.

May 5-8
Chau Dancers from Purulia
Studio 2, Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, London W6
Chau from the Purulia district of west Bengal is one of the rarest dance-drama forms in India. Spectacular masks, decorated with tinsel, pearls and ribbons are used.

May 5-May 29
Traditional Village Crafts from Rajasthan
Bristol Guild, 68-70 Park Street, Bristol
An exhibition of contemporary textiles, furniture, jewellery and clothes from Rajasthan, collected by Joss Graham, were on display.

May 5-May31
19th Century Photographs of India
The Fox Talbot Museum, Lacock, Chippenham, Wilts
An exhibition of early and contemporary photographs dating back to the middle of the 19th century.

May 7
GURU DISCIPLE TRADITION-2
KATHAK DANCES—INTRODUCTION
Commonwealth Institute, High Street, Kensington, London W8
Introduction to the Kathak style presented by Guru Birju Maharaj and his disciple, Saswati Sen.

May 8-May 9
KATHAK DANCES
Studio 2, Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, London W6
Performances of Kathak dances by Birju Maharaj, best-known to British audiences for his work in Satyajit Ray's The Chess Players.

May 8-May 31
THE LIVING ARTS
Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London W2
During this exhibition of classical and folk crafts, master craftsmen from different regions of India demonstrated ways of working in stone, wood, brass, textiles, terracotta and bronze, inside and outside the Gallery.



The Serpentine Gallery

May 20-June 4
Paintings by Teddy Millington-Drake in Ladakh and Kashmir, 1981
Eyre & Hobhouse Ltd., 39 Duke Street, St. James's, London SW1
Acknowledged to be in the forefront of contemporary English artists who have found that Indian landscape and architecture is their most sympathetic foreign ground.

May 26-May 28
Teaching About India
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
An exhibition of books and teaching materials, the first held in Britain devoted solely to teaching materials, for use in projects on India.

May 27
GURU DISCIPLE TRADITION—3
DHRUPAD MUSIC—INTRODUCTION
Purcell Room, Belvedere Road, London SE1
Guru Nasir Aminuddin Khan Dagar, one of India's greatest singers, demonstrated the different types of Dhrupad music, considered to be the oldest vocal form of Hindustani music.

May 29-May 30
DHRUPAD MUSIC
Studio 2, Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, London W6
Following his introduction to this musical style on May 27, Guru Nasir Aminuddin Khan Dagar with his disciples and accompanists presented two programmes of Dhrupad music.

May 31-June 6
Indian Life—Half-time activity sessions for adults and children
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8

May 29-June 26
Images of India: 19th Century Photographs
Central Art Gallery, Lichfield Street, Wolverhampton

May 31-July 3
AN EYE FOR INDIA
National Theatre, Upper Ground, South Bank, London SE1
An exhibition of contemporary photographs of India by four British photographers, Ian Berry, Michael Freeman, Patrick Ward and Derry Moore, and four Indian photographers, Raghu Rai, Dasrath Patel, T. S. Nagarajan and Rajesh Bedi.

May 31-Aug 15
INDIA AND BRITAIN
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
This ambitious exhibition presented the story of Indian and British peoples' involvement through 400 years of history from the early 1600s to the present day. Using theatrical techniques and exhibits, coming from collections in India and Britain, the displays highlighted the relationship of two peoples of starkly contrasting cultural backgrounds. The present day was covered by showing India's achievements as a democracy and the arrival of Indians in Britain and their contribution to the British way of life.

June

June 7-June 19
SEE INDIA
The Central Milton Keynes Shopping Centre, Milton Keynes, Bucks

June 8-July 9
Beyond the Verandah
Eyre & Hobhouse Ltd., 39 Duke Street, St. James's, London SW1
An exhibition which included water-colours and prints of Anglo-Indian buildings, gardens, compounds and land-scapes in the nineteenth century.

June 11-June 12
Women in India
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8

June 12-July 17
Lala Deen Dayal Photographs
Swiss Cottage Library, 88 Avenue Road, London NW3
The career of India's most celebrated photographer Lala Deen Dayal, was shown in an exhibition of 200 photographs.

June 22-July 9
Paintings of India
Spink & Son Ltd., King Street, St. James's, London SW1
Richard Foster, a regular contributor at the Royal Academy, has travelled widely in India, and this exhibition featured some of his landscape and portrait paintings in oils and gouache.

June 24
GURU-DISCIPLE TRADITION—4
KUTIYATTAM and KATHAKALI DANCE-DRAMA—INTRODUCTION
Purcell Room, Belvedere Road, London SE1
Guru Ammannur Madhava Chakyar and his company, and a Guru from Kerala in southern India with his disciple, presented an introduction to the ancient dance-drama styles of Kutiyattam and Kathakali.

June 26
South Indian Gala Night
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4a Castletown Road, London W14
An evening of music, dance, food and drama from the south of India.

June 27
KUTIYATTAM AND KATHAKALI DANCE-DRAMA
Studio 2, Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, London W6
Dancers and musicians from the Kerala region.

July

June 27-July 4
Academy of Indian Dance
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
Tara Rajkumar, Director of the Academy of Indian Dance and a well-known exponent of the classical dance styles, Kathakali and Mohiniattam, together with some of her more advanced students, gave three evening performances showing the dances, costumes and make-up of these styles. Visiting artists and musicians from the Festival of India also participated.
There were also two masterclasses, a seminar and two introductory sessions on Indian dance.

June 28-July 3
SEE-INDIA
Wood Green Shopping City, Wood Green, London

July 2
Gujarati Gala Night
Brent Town Hall, Forty Lane, Wembley
An evening of Gujarati folk song and dance, music, poetry and food.

July 2-July 3
The Eye of the Beholder—Seminar on Indian Writing in English
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8

July 2-Aug 1
ADITI—A Celebration of Life
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
Aditi demonstrations, artists, craftsmen and performers from India, in association with the Barbican Arts Centre, performed traditional art forms celebrating the many customs and rituals connected with the child.

July 2-Aug 1
ADITI—A Celebration of Life
Barbican Centre for Arts & Conferences, Silk Street, Barbican, London EC2
The central theme of this exhibition portrayed the child as the motivating inspiration in much of Indian culture and heritage. Craftsmen and performers from India were involved in drama, mime, puppetry and acrobatics. There were also displays of over 3,000 craft and ritual artefacts.



The Barbican Centre for Arts & Conferences

July 5-July 10
Sanskritik Presentation of Classical Music and Dances
Queen Elizabeth Hall & Purcell Room, London SE1
Classical music, dance and traditional dance-drama were featured in this six-day event. The programme included recitals of sarod and violin music, as well as Khayal singing and Odissi and Bharata Natyam dancing.

July 9-July 10
India and Great Britain—Seminar
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
A two-day seminar organised in co-operation with the University of London Extramural Department.

July 9-August 7
Images of India—19th Century Photographs
Impressions Gallery of Photography, 17 Colliergate, York

July 10
Bengali Gala Night
Tower Hamlets Girls' School, London E1
Third in the regional series of Bengali gala nights concentrated on the folk songs, music and dance of East and West Bengal, and was presented by artists from the community resident in Britain.

July 10-July 11
Cosmic Celebration
St. James's Church, Piccadilly, London W1
Dancers, actors and musicians from a variety of religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam performed at St. James's Church.

July 11
Rathayatra—Festival of the Chariots
Krishna Consciousness Society
Procession from Hyde Park Corner to Trafalgar Square, where a cultural festival took place.

July 15-July 30
European Water-colours of India during the British Period
Eyre & Hobhouse Ltd., 39 Duke Street, St. James's, London SW1
Painting and sketching formed a major part of liberal education in the nineteenth century, and many were taught by professional water-colour artists before leaving England. India offered many strange and picturesque subjects to those who went out there and a unique record was built up by many talented amateurs whose work has survived.

July 16-July 18
Music, Dance, Drama Festival
Royal Bath & West Showground, Bath

July 17-July 18
Kabbadi Tournament
Spikesbridge Recreation Ground, Southall, Middx
Kabbadi is a powerful Punjabi team game whose popularity is undimmed in the UK, and which has huge community support.

July 17
Punjabi Gala Night
Acton Town Hall, Acton High Street, London W3
Folk dance, music and satire were presented by artists from the Punjabi community in Britain.

July 19-July 24
SEE-INDIA
Arndale Centre, Manchester

July 25
India in London Family Day
Holland Park, London W8
Fun for the family with acrobats and folk dances, games, stalls, an elephant, and much, much more.

July 25
India in Britain Gala Night
Holland Park Open Air Theatre, London W8
An evening of celebration by Indian artists and performers living in Britain.

August

August
India in Britain
Barbican Arts Centre, Silk Street, London EC2
An exhibition of painters, sculptors and printmakers of Indian origin, who have settled in Britain.

August 2-Aug 7
Plays Presented by Indian Community Groups
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
Groups from Britain's Indian communities performed plays in a number of Indian languages—from Marathi to Tamil—with translations in English available.

August 2-Aug 7
SEE-INDIA
Bond Street Shopping Centre, Leeds, Yorkshire

August 16-Aug 21
SEE-INDIA
Birmingham Shopping Centre, Birmingham

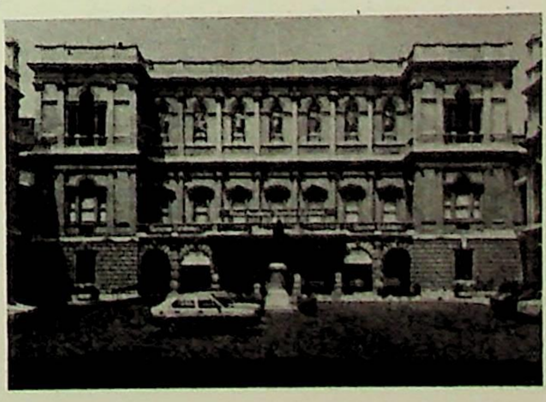
August 30-Sept 4
SEE-INDIA
The Quadrant Shopping Centre, Swansea, Glamorgan

August/September
HABIB TANVIR'S NAYA THEATRE
Theatre by folk artists from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, directed by Habib Tanvir.

September

September 13-Sept 24
Indian Army Figures
Michael Sutty Gallery, Duke Street, St. James's, London SW1
Michael Sutty is the world's, foremost military sculptor and his figures are produced in English bone china, hand-decorated in the finest enamels and gold and silver lustres.
Based upon historical and military events, part of his range illustrated both officers and Indian rank and file of the British Indian Army.

September 18-Oct 31
CONTEMPORARY ART FROM INDIA
Royal Academy of Arts, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1
An exhibition of work by 35 contemporary Indian painters, sculptors and graphic artists.



The Royal Academy of Arts

September 20-Oct 16
Veeraswamy's Food Festival
Veeraswamy's Restaurant, Regent Street, London W1

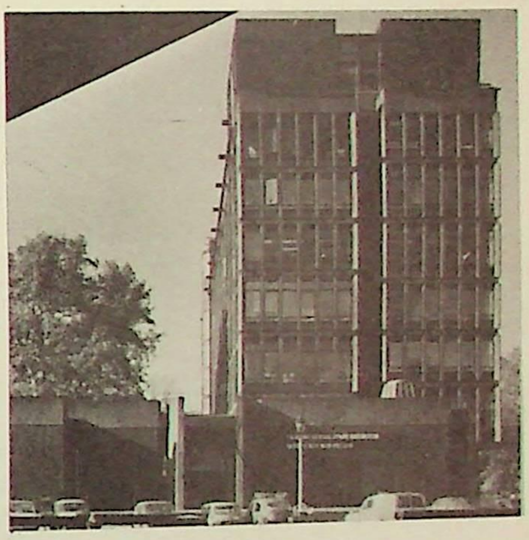
September 24
Sitar Concert
Queen Elizabeth Hall, Belvedere Road, London SE1
A concert of north Indian classical music was given by the renowned sitar player Nikhil Banerjee.

September 28-Oct 1
YAKSHAGANA and MARTIAL ARTS
Riverside Studios
An unique programme of dance-drama and martial arts, including Yakshagana, Kalaripayattu and Thang-Ta.

October

October 7-Nov 4
An Exhibition of Photographs by Elizabeth Simson
Turbans and Textiles from Rajasthan.
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8

October 9-Nov 17
TEXTILES AND CERAMICS—THE MASTER WEAVERS
Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7
A major exhibition of modern Indian handcrafted textiles and ceramics, including examples of painted and printed cloths, embroidery, pigment paintings on cloth, tie-dye fabrics, zari and other brocades, shawls and mixed fabrics in traditional and symbolic Indian designs.



The Royal College of Arts

October 10-Oct 22
National School of Drama Repertory Company from Delhi
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
The National School of Drama Repertory Company from Delhi presented three plays.

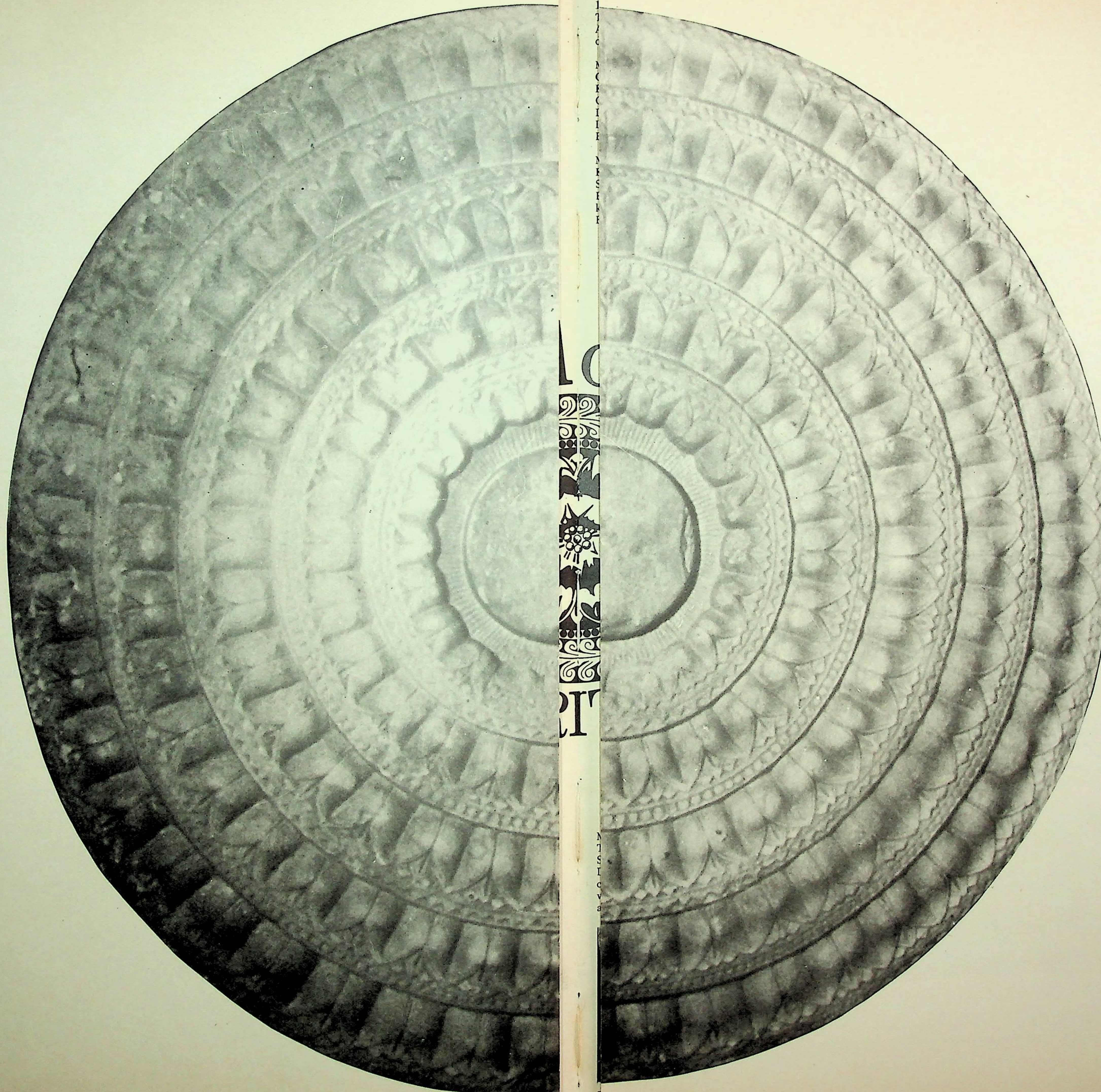
October 12, 19, 26-November 2, 9, 16
Britain and India: The Historical Experience
King's College London, Strand, London WC2
A series of six public lectures, besides examining historical perspectives, discussed literature, the visual arts and architecture.

October 21-Oct 23
India Performing Arts
Purcell Room, Belvedere Road, South Bank, London SE1
India Performing Arts, a company formed to present Indian arts and artists, performed a programme of dance, music and drama in the Purcell Room and other venues from April to October.

October 25-Nov 13
NATIONAL BOOK TRUST OF INDIA
Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8
A representative collection of 1,500 books published in India were on display, written in English and various Indian languages and covering art, architecture, Indian culture, philosophy, etc.

November

November 14
END OF FESTIVAL CONCERT
London Coliseum, St. Martin's Lane WC1
Folk Dancers, Drummers and Musicians from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.



Introduction

The Festival of India was inaugurated in London on the twentysecond of March 1982 with a gala concert at the Royal Festival Hall in the august presence of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and the Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P., Prime Minister of Britain. The joint patrons of the Festival of India also attended the opening event. This occasion signalled the beginning of a spectacular phenomenon—the scale and extent of which was unprecedented. Never before had the civilisation and culture of India, or for that matter of any country—been projected in such a multi-faceted and sustained manner in an international context.

The proposal to hold a celebration of India in Britain was first made in 1977 by Sir John Thompson, the then High Commissioner to India. It received an enthusiastic response in both countries as both felt that the time had come for Britain and India to collaborate on an exhibition presenting the rich and colourful panorama of the Indian cultural heritage. The last time such an event had taken place was in 1947-48 when Indian antiquities were exhibited at the Burlington House in London immediately after India had acquired independent political status.

In the three decades that had elapsed since then much had happened in India in the political, economic, scientific and cultural spheres. With the attainment of political independence the Indian nation experienced a resurgence of pride in its heritage. Shaken from its earlier apathy, it felt motivated by a conscious desire to turn to its cultural past with a view to rediscover it and preserve it. This led to many interesting and exciting developments in different areas. In the field of art and archaeology new discoveries and systematic investigation of sites added substantially to the depth and extent of existing knowledge. In the performing arts a reassessment of traditional forms not only inspired innovations and experiments within the framework of classical dance and music but also aroused an awareness for the lesser known idioms. There was also a concerted effort to support craft traditions that had been practised for centuries but were in danger of being wiped out with the rapid industrialisation of the country. However, little of what was happening was known outside it: only a few were aware of it. The suggestion of having an exhibition that would reflect the vibrant manifestations of Indian culture, therefore, could not have come at a better time. And, certainly, the choice of the United Kingdom as the venue for such an exhibition could not have been more appropriate. For, three hundred years of close association linked India and Britain together and this relationship though altered, still persists. It was generally felt that an exposure to India—its hopes and aspirations, its art and culture—would go a long way in redefining and strengthening the long-standing connections between the two countries.

The proposal of holding an exhibition of Indian Art in London found formal acceptance in 1979 and was scheduled for 1982. Soon, scholars and specialists met across the table to pool ideas on the content, the timing and the location of such an event. As the discussions progressed it became evident that the 'event' would assume the form of several exhibitions on various facets of Indian Art—both the Fine and the Performing Arts. It would be the Festival of India and would comprise a galaxy of events that would celebrate the total expression of India's culture and heritage spanning its progress from the primitive Stone Age to the dynamic Space Age. It was agreed that the Festival of India would be patterned on the theme of "Continuity and Change" with the objective of emphasising the unique quality of the Indian Civilisation which enables its traditions to carry forward the India of the past into the India of the present and the future. Several exhibitions and performances were planned around central concepts which portrayed India—its Indian-ness and the creative attitudes embodied in its artistic and cultural manifestations.

From the outset it was clear that such an ambitious project needed to be established at the highest Government levels. The proposed Festival of India was announced in a joint statement by the Prime Ministers of both countries. There was full collaboration between Indian and British government departments, museums and scholars in planning and mounting the exhibitions. The organisation of the Festival of India commenced with the setting up of the Festival Committee in Britain and its Indian counterpart, the National Advisory Committee, under the inspired leadership of Smt. Pupul Jayakar.

The Festival of India was designed and orchestrated to represent the great historical past through exhibitions of its magnificent sculptures, exquisite paintings and ancient manuscripts. The past was linked to the present through traditions that have persisted through the centuries and continue to this day. This was to be supplemented by the achievements of contemporary artists—painters, dancers and musicians. The artists were drawn from both genres—those who chose to work within the terms of reference set by ancient traditions and those who sought a more modern means of expression. A further dimension was to be provided by a presentation of Indian Science and Technology. The Festival of India, thus, covered a wide spectrum of events and its overall breadth was highlighted by detailed treatment through exhibitions devoted to certain specific aspects. Nearly all the museums in London were involved and they made significant contributions through exhibitions which included objects in their own collections as well as loans from museums and private collectors from India and other countries. The Commonwealth Institute too played a prominent role.

Of the various exhibitions presented during the Festival of India, **In the Image of Man** at the Hayward Gallery was clearly the centre-piece. It was the setting for some of the greatest achievements of Indian Art, many of which had never been seen outside India. The 600 objects displayed in it spotlighted the essence of Indian thought over 2000 years. Several of them were lesser-known masterpieces brought with great difficulty from distant places to Delhi and then sent by air to London. One gigantic sculpture, for instance, was transported by truck to Delhi from Assam in the north-eastern region of India: the arduous journey took three weeks. Similarly, another piece was brought from a remote site—far from any road— in Karnataka and travelled 1500 kilometres to Delhi. It was absolutely thrilling to see all these glorious pieces assembled in one place. Yet, it involved exposing all these incomparable works of art to the hazards of transportation and handling.

Apart from the superlative quality of the exhibits and their diversity, the exhibition attracted much attention because it was conceived thematically and not chronologically—all the usual considerations such as those of period, style and development were discarded. This new approach resulted in the grouping of sculptures and paintings from different periods and regions according to theme. It proved most disconcerting to some scholars. But to others, especially those belonging to the younger generation in India, this intuitive departure appeared highly impressive. Many of us felt that our perception of Indian attitudes was sharpened by this method and expressed the hope that something akin to this would become available in India for the Indians to see and respond to. Perhaps, an arrangement like the one worked out after the Burlington exhibition in London in 1947 could be considered. At that time the objects, on their return from London to India, were acquired by the National Museum of India and became the core of its collection. It would indeed be of great educative value if the exhibits at the **In the Image of Man** show could be set up in India as a separate exhibit on a permanent basis for all to see and draw inspiration from. For, the thematic approach had served to underline the cohesiveness of Indian thought that transgressed regional boundaries and historical circumstances. At the same time it emphasised the variation in treatment induced by local idioms in different periods. It reflected cogently the unity and diversity that characterises Indian culture.

In contrast to this vast coverage of Indian Art the exhibition on **The Art of the Book** at the British Museum was a small exquisite show devoted to manuscripts written and illustrated in the subcontinent. Superbly conceived and mounted, it added new insights to the understanding of this art form. Dramatic in its impact and visually the most effective was the exhibition of **The Indian Heritage** at the Victoria and Albert Museum featuring a sumptuous display of Mughal paintings and the decorative arts. Above all, it demonstrated, that the decorative arts could not be dismissed as being of minor value and, in fact, kindled an interest in these objects among collectors and connoisseurs. **The India Observed** exhibition, also held at the Victoria and Albert Museum presented the enduring fascination that India exercised on the British artists who came during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their drawings and paintings served as pictorial quotations of their impressions of India.

Vasna, the exhibition at the Museum of Mankind, portrayed a contemporary village in Gujarat. The organisers had painstakingly created an authentic atmosphere, and taken care to include details of sights and smells. In this exhibition the continuities of age-old traditions in today's world could be observed most vividly. In another exhibition, **The Living Arts**, at the Serpentine Gallery, nine artisans demonstrated how they practised their inherited skills in such mediums as stone, sculpture, bronze-casting, paint and pigment dyeing, and cloth-weaving.

This series of exhibitions, organised by major museums and institutions in London, were scheduled for the first half of the Festival. They represented the initial phase which highlighted India's rich cultural patterns of the past. In the second phase, spread over the latter half of the Festival, the emphasis shifted to illustrating the present and future developments in India's activities. The National Advisory Committee of India devised and sponsored a series of exhibitions which included **Aditi—A Celebration of Life, Contemporary Art from India** and **The Master Weavers** to reflect these trends. The transition from the first half to the second half of the Festival was effected smoothly by exhibitions like **Vasna** and **The Living Arts** which spanned the past as well as the present.

Of these exhibitions, the one that communicated most readily to the viewers was **Aditi—A Celebration of Life.** The exhibition told the story of the Indian child—from his mother's womb to his coming of age. Throughout this period he is the focal point of much creative activity and he is surrounded by beautifully crafted objects and ritual artefacts. This remarkable exhibition juxta-posed objects with individuals who gave them meaning, thus linking the Indian visual and performing arts with traditional craftsmanship and folklore. It was lively and vivid and offered a joyous glimpse into an Indian way of life.

The exhibitions in London represented the official aspect of the Festival of India but formed only a part of it. The remaining section known as the Associated Festival encompassed a wide variety of events organised by professional institutions, learned societies and cultural centres as also private art galleries, department stores and restaurants. It gave the Festival its variegated look and contributed to its tempo. Educational institutions also participated by devising programmes connected with Festival events. The Festival Review—a bi-monthly newspaper published specially to report on the Festival—noted that **The Living Arts** exhibition was among the most successful ever held at The Third Eye Centre at Glasgow. The exhibition not only drew the highest number of visitors but also that the viewers stayed for longer in the galleries than was usually the case. Furthermore, it attracted specialists including artists trained in Contemporary Western Art. These visitors became interested in the techniques employed by Indian craftsmen and invited them to their studios. The Glasgow School of Art enjoyed working with them—the language barrier was seemingly of little importance.

The Festival of India was celebrated in various locations throughout the United Kingdom from 22 March 1982 to 14 November 1982. Of its nineteen exhibitions and many accompanying events, several were designed so that they overlapped and interlinked with one another. Prestigious seminars, lectures and activities connected with aspects of Indian art and culture were organised to coincide with these events. They brought together scholars from India, Europe and North America and the exchange of ideas and information resulted in new ways of understanding and interpreting Indian Art, Culture and Thought.

The various events of the Festival were well-attended. Records show that more than one and a half million people visited them. Among the regular visitors were parties of schoolchildren and undoubtedly these young minds must have formed very vivid impressions of another country—a different civilisation. But even more than these official events, it must have been the local events of the Associated Festival that must have made a deeper and more lasting impression on the youngsters. These occasions, organised by local bodies and familiar figures, were at a less exalted level, and therefore easy to relate to and participate in.

Even before the Festival of India concluded it was apparent that it had succeeded in revitalising the relationship that had existed between India and Britain for centuries. Certainly, for those who had known the country when it was part of the British Empire it evoked a nostalgia for the days of the Raj. At the same time it deepened their understanding of India's cultural past and its present preoccupations. For those born after World War II, whose knowledge unlike the earlier generations was not based on direct contact with India but stemmed from "A level history courses and novels of Kipling and Paul Scott" the Festival must have come as a revelation. The media had conditioned their image of India so that they saw it as a land of the starving poor and opulent *maharajas*, of mundane people and spiritual *gurus*, of a third world country which is proud and defiant but can hardly afford to be so. For them all these activities must have helped clear what was baffling and bewildering. Perhaps after this exposure of its varied aspects India must have appeared less mystifying and strange. And this knowledge will, hopefully, remove their misconception and equip them with a better perspective with which to view India and the Indians. It would certainly contribute towards a better understanding of the immigrant Indians within their midst. To the immigrant Indians themselves the Festival must have acted as a source of great pride in the culture of their origin, even if some of the events must have struck them as being strange, and disturbing. The Festival of India was a remarkable and memorable event and as Mrs Gandhi said it had "succeeded beyond our wildest hopes". It did not serve just a "show window for India but had actively created interest in India". It was an event of tremendous significance and the implications engendered in cultural, academic, political, economic and social areas were most meaningful.

Last year, coinciding with the inauguration of the Festival of India, Marg published a volume featuring some of the Performing Art forms that were going to be presented in the celebrations. At that time we had decided to bring out a companion volume which would record most of the major exhibitions that were organised for the Festival. While it is true that many of these exhibitions have been catalogued in handsome publications, it is also a fact that there is no publication which represents them all in one single volume. Furthermore, these exhibition catalogues deal with the subject in a scholarly and exhaustive manner that is directed more towards the specialists than an intelligent person who is interested but not informed on the subject. We wished to fill this need and fortunately for us all those connected with organising the exhibitions and compiling the catalogues agreed to write for us and supply superb illustrations to accompany the text. In this volume Marg provides vivid glimpses of the pageant of Indian Art presented during the Festival of India in London in 1982.

Saryu Doshi



Continuity and Change

To organise a festival is to float oil-lamps in tiny boats on a river; for an instant to illumine the ripples on the water and the rapt faces of those that participate in the launching; to awaken sound, colour, mood, flavour, fragrance and laughter; to set before the mirror of attention times past and time present; and, when the festival ends, to disappear, like the boats, into the night. Festivals, like all celebrations, are fantasy.

We organised and orchestrated a Festival. The Festival of India in Britain was intended to reveal the emergent face of India, to pay homage to its arts and to see its history unfold through changing artefact and environment; to generate insights into the cultural streams that have contributed to the Indian ethos and to view the impact of science and technology on an ancient culture and civilisation.

What was significant in the making of the Festival was the coming together of some of the most talented minds of Britain and India. Insight, skill, detailed work, co-operation and collaboration made the Festival a milestone in the cultural events of the world.

Late in 1978, the British Government had proposed the possibility of a large-scale exhibition of Indian classical art. A Trust Committee and a Festival Committee were set up in Britain with Sir Michael Walker as Chairman. In 1980, the Indian Government appointed an Advisory Committee with Smt. Pupul Jayakar as Chairperson, to organise and collaborate with the British Committees in all aspects of the Festival.

The Festival of India was the most comprehensive projection, since Independence, of India's past and present, conceived through a series of exhibitions, films, drama, music and dance (over three hundred performing artistes and craftsmen went to England). Educational programmes for children, lectures and seminars pertaining to India were organised throughout the country.

On March 22, 1982, to the sound of drumbeats and the fanfare of trumpets the Festival of India in Britain commenced in the presence of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. At this inauguration held at the Royal Festival Hall, M.S. Subbulakshmi's voice and the *Kritis* of Thyagaraja were heard by a vast audience, followed by a *Raga-Mala* Concerto composed and performed by Ravi Shankar with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zubin Mehta. Two major exhibitions also formed part of the inaugural functions — the exhibition of Classical Art at the Hayward Gallery and the exhibition of Science and Technology at the Science Museum.

The theme of the Festival was "Continuity and Change". Major exhibitions portraying the ancient heritage of India were held in the Hayward Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum and the Museum of Mankind. Through sculptures of terracotta, stone and bronze, miniature paintings, illustrated manuscripts and splendid craft objects and textiles, the vision and skills of the past unfolded. The selection of the exhibits from museums and private collections in India, England and several other countries evinced integrity of judgement and the quality and arrangement of the objects gave the exhibitions' thematic approach a visually unified expression. The viewers were thus enabled to sense the creative impulses that have stirred the hearts of the Indian people through the ages.

The character, variety and quality of modern India, its people, its skills and its vision as seen through colour, sound and form were projected through exhibitions of contemporary Indian art, through craft skills and their links to live ritual, through the textile arts, through films, books, graphics and photographs. The passion, insight and quality of these exhibitions and the creative skills of the visualisers of these themes were of profound importance in projecting the total picture of India's past and present.

A major exhibition of Science and Technology held at the Science Museum in London highlighted India's scientific achievements, stretching right from the distant past (dating back to approximately 4,500 years ago) up to the India of today. The highlights were a reconstruction of the well-planned cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation depicting the advances that had been made in architecture, town-planning, sanitation, geometry and algebra, hygiene, construction of harbours and docks, and medicine. Another section highlighted the contributions of Indian scientists over the centuries leading up to the scientific achievements of modern India. A section was also devoted to the development of Indian agriculture, medicine and atomic-energy and space-technology.

One of the most important aspects of the Festival was the education programmes organised through schools, universities and museums. Intended to create awareness of the rich heritage of India's past and of a dynamic contemporary India in the minds of the young, they were pivotal to the creating of an ambience without

which the Festival would not have achieved what it set out to do.

The exhibition of Classical Indian Art held at the Hayward Gallery thematically portrayed universal phenomena as the cyclic interplay of creation, preservation and destruction. Over three hundred paintings and sculptures were used to depict the major symbols of Indian art — from the theme of tree and woman to the dances of Krishna and Shiva. Concurrent with this exhibition was an exhibition of Indian Manuscripts in the British Library.

An exhibition entitled "From Village to City in Ancient India" was presented at the British Museum. Compiled by the Archaeological Survey of India, it projected India's work in the field of pre- and proto-history and depicted recent excavations in India, particularly in the post-Independence period. Concurrent with this exhibition and complementary to the theme of early settlements in India, an exhibition revolving around the Indian village was held in the Museum of Mankind. The exhibition highlighted the rich traditions in crafts and life-style patterns which are still extant in Indian villages.

Simultaneously, an exhibition called "The Indian Heritage" portrayed the decorative arts which flourished from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. This exhibition was held at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Indian handwoven textiles have always occupied a unique place in the cultural history of India. The exhibition of Master Weavers at the Royal College of Art projected the great contemporary textile arts of this country and focused on the continuity of tradition. This exhibition was probably the most comprehensive attempt so far to present contemporary Indian handwoven textiles — printed and embroidered.

The Contemporary Arts Sub-Committee took great pains to mount a representative exhibition of "Contemporary Indian Art". The Commissioners for this exhibition selected more than thirty-five artists from all over the country and over a hundred pieces of their art. The prestigious Royal Academy Halls had been hired for this exhibition. A beautiful catalogue was printed which has become a collector's item.

An exhibition entitled "The Modern Indian Artists" was held at the Tate Gallery. It featured the works of six painters — three contemporary artists and three who are no longer living. These painters were M.F. Husain, Bhupen Khakhar and K.G. Subramanyan along with Rabindranath Tagore, Jamini Roy and Amrita Sher-Gil.

"Aditi — Creations, Celebrations", a unique exhibition, was a celebration of life as seen in rural India. It brought together in a single perception crafts and craftsmen; live performances by puppeteers, ballad-singers, acrobats, magicians, dancers and musicians; traditional rural environments; and actual workshops with visitors as participants. "Aditi" in its conception provided a break-through in exhibition techniques. It was perhaps the only way to present the joys and skills of rural India in all its varied facets. Many of the arts on view had not so far been seen outside their own villages, and visitors felt the pulse of an India they had not so far encountered.

An attempt to portray and probe the vivid face of India was seen in an exhibition of the works of four British and four Indian photographers. Ian Berry looked at Varanasi, the ultimate pilgrimage. Derry Moor looked at the tan-yellow of Rajasthan's desert palaces; Michael Freeman at the ancient faces of Kerala and Karnataka; and Patrick Ward at the intense Catholicism that thrives along the magnificent beaches and sheltered coves of Goa. The Indian photographers returned to their own inherited realities — Raghu Rai to the tribal world of Nagaland and Baster; T.S. Nagarajan to the warm temple lands of his native south; Dilip Mehta to the intensity and largesse of Punjab; and Dashrath Patel to the crafts and energy of Gujarat.

A series of concerts and recitals of the performing arts was held during the course of the Festival. Some of these performances had been timed to coincide with the exhibitions relating to Indian art so that relationships between the various branches of the Indian artistic tradition became clear and the different aspects could be understood as manifestations of an integrated view of the world.

The first event in the series was the *Guru-Shishya Parampara,* where outstanding gurus of classical Indian dance and music performed along with their pupils. Participating in this series were gurus of the Odissi, Kathak, Koodiyattam and Kathakali dance forms. The Dhrupad school of music was also represented. These performances coincided with the "In the Image of Man" exhibition at the Hayward Gallery.

The folk and tribal dances of Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh; traditional dance-dramas such as Kathakali and Yakshagana; Chhau dancers from Purulia along with Kalaripayattu and Thangta, the martial arts of Kerala and Manipur respectively, were presented during the eight months. The classical forms included Bharata Natyam, classical northern Indian music and the finest forms of Carnatic music.

Through these concerts and performances the British audiences gained glimpses of the rich tradition of the Indian performing arts. Troupes were also taken outside London and a large number of people in the country got an opportunity to watch them perform.

The Film Festival continued throughout the year and included silent films; a series of films of India through foreign eyes; a Ritwik Ghatak Retrospective; and films made by the "new wave" film directors.

The Festival ended on November 14, 1982, with a series of classical and folk dances interwoven into a programme that linked the two main themes of the Festival — antiquity and contemporaneity.

Apart from the interest evoked in London, events connected with the Festival were organised in all parts of Great Britain. A mini Festival was held in the Museum of Modern Art at Oxford and exhibitions and performances were presented in most of the other major cities of Great Britain. This spontaneous participation transformed the river of the Festival into a flood.

One of the important aspects of the Festival was the interest taken by most of the major department stores and merchandising agencies in selling products from India. For eight months the pulse of the cities and villages of India was heard in Britain.

The coverage we got from the media — newspapers, magazines, radio and television — was most generous and appreciative. There was a sense of nostalgia mingled with a sense of discovery — an impact that perhaps will lead to a long-lasting, far-reaching dialogue between the two countries.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in her message at the inaugural function, said: "All beginnings are fragile and have to be nurtured. Through the vicissitudes of its long history, Indian society has proved its resilience. The vitality of its new and creative endeavour will strengthen the national fabric. India is emerging as a country of abounding potential — concerned with the human predicament, reaching out beyond known horizons."

The Festival has ended and the creative life of India begins anew.

Pupul Jayakar

IN THE IMAGE OF MAN

The Indian perception of the Universe through 2000 years of painting and sculpture

The theme of Indian art, in essence, is the universe in all its abundance and multiplicity of life and form. And yet within and behind this complex whole is that omniscient, omnipotent and transcendental spirit which permeates forms and which is itself, in the last analysis, without form (*arupa*).

Life on earth, as in the Biblical stories, emerges from the eternal Waters that hold the potency of Fire: Water and Fire together change into the forms of the world — mineral, plant, animal, human and divine. In India, this evolutionary pattern is traditionally couched in a language of myths and symbols.

From the primeval waters emerge stones in many shapes — ovoid pebbles and spheres with ammonites going back millions of years. They are the *bana-lingas, shaligramas,* worshipped as self-shaped (*swayambhu*) deities. The exhibition opens with a display of these ammonites and pebbles from the beds of the Narmada and its tributaries. The earliest Indian writing conceives of life emerging from these rivers and oceans, and also from the *anda,* the cosmic egg of all creation.

From the primeval waters emerges the lotus, the most important of vegetative forms born of the waters, connected to the mythical centre of the earth through its stem, and always above the waters, blooming with beauty and fragrance. Both physically and mythically, the lotus assumes the greatest importance in Indian cosmology, speculative thought and art. The lotus and its petals are the multiplicity of form: its centre corresponds to the centre of the universe, the navel of the earth; all is held together by the stem and the eternal waters. From this first awareness of the lotus as the symbol of life and supporter of the universe, the Indian mind conceives of all nature as an aspect of the universal spirit.

Nature is indispensable to the human world — the two are interrelated, interdependent and always transmutable. The world of vegetation has inspired a great variety of motifs throughout Indian art. These are naturalistic, beautiful and spontaneous on one level, and imbued with symbolic significance on another level: the two move concurrently, distinguishing this approach from pantheism.

The life of water and plants is intrinsically related to the first creations of nature, the reptiles. Like the lotus, they too represent a moment of transition. As in other ancient religions, a special significance has been given in India to the snake. The coiled and intertwined snake represents a moment in the undifferentiated condition of creation (*pralaya*) on which human life rests.

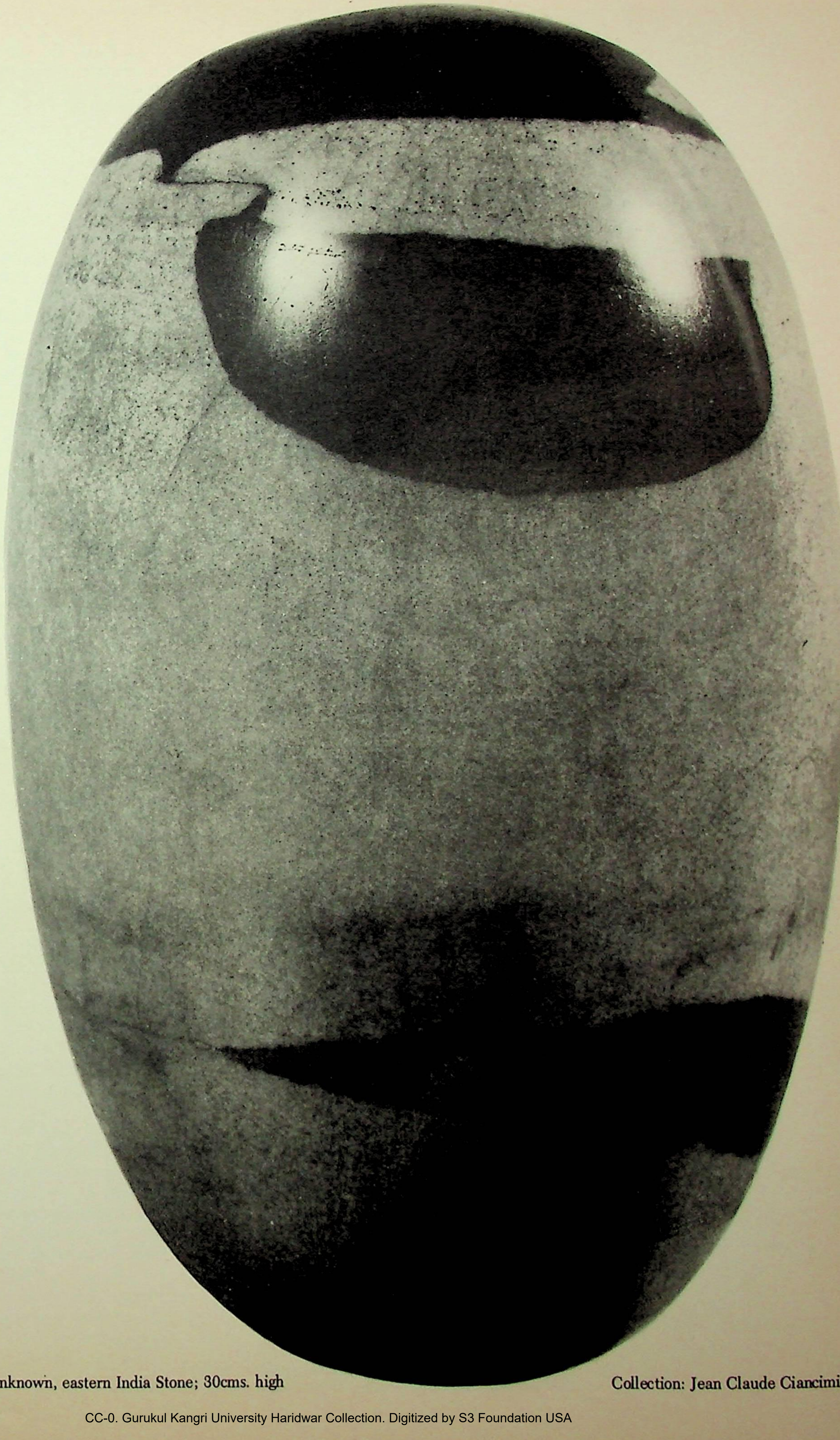
The snakes and reptiles, in a dramatic moment of biological mutation, acquired wings and became birds. Intuitively the Indian seer knew the process: both Indian myth and art provide significant examples of reptiles changing to birds, or coalescing into conjoined images. This is a pervasive theme and provides Indian art with an opportunity for the creation of some of the most fantastic images in stone and wood. The animals follow suit, and a wide range of forms, from the hare to the lion, from the rodent to the primate, is vividly represented.

Most Indian sculpture is structured to comprehend the world of aquatic, plant, animal and human life. Each is an aspect of the other; superficially they appear as decoration; yet, at a deeper level, the aquatic, vegetative and animal elements represent aspects of the human psyche. Metamorphosis and transmutation is logical and traditional.

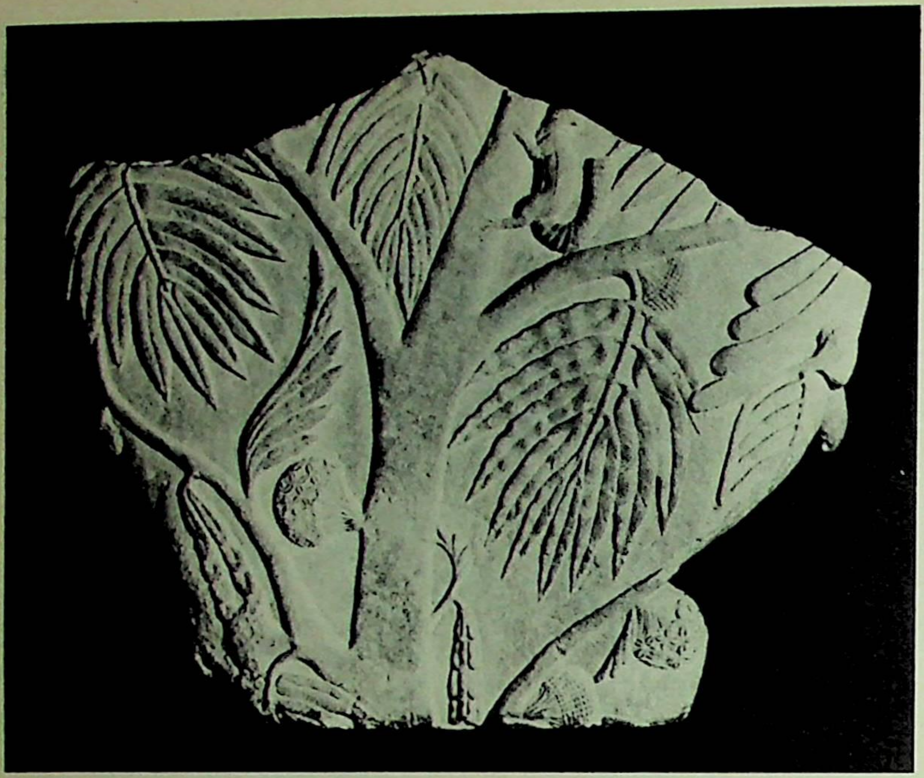
This rich abundance of nature, its manifold creation and organic coherence, logically culminates in the universal fertility theme known to all ancient religions. The fertility of Mother Earth is symbolised through the image of the brimming vase, the bowl of plenty. Foliage and the lotus emerge from it; the waters below represent the life-giving forces of regeneration; and energy surges out through the vegetation as the sap of life (*rasa*). Water, earth, plant, animal, the human and the divine come together again to form the image of the goddess of fecundity, Lakshmi.

More primary is the symbolism of the mother goddess. Mother goddesses persist in Indian sculpture in many shapes and forms, dating back some four thousand years.

These mother goddesses are related to another group of female figures, the *yakshis,* along with their male counterparts, the *yakshas.* They too symbolize the fertility of water and earth. They stand against trees, embrace them, and thus become an aspect of the tree, articulating the interpenetration of the plant and the human. The tree is dependent upon the woman for its fertility, as is the woman on the tree.



1 *Svayambhu-linga* Age unknown, eastern India Stone; 30cms. high Collection: Jean Claude Ciancimino



2



3

It is the *yakshis,* essentially representing the water and earth principle, which culminate in the image of the river goddesses, principally Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati. In geographical terms, these are three important rivers of the Indo-Gangetic plain; in mythical terms they are the principle of eternal sustenance. Throughout the subcontinent, Indian shrines portray mighty figures of Ganga and Yamuna standing on their respective vehicles guarding the sanctuaries and preparing the devotee for the inner journey. Sarasvati, the third river, has now run dry, but is remembered as the goddess of speech and learning and also of music.

The female principle, although fundamental, is never independent of that other principle which is indispensable to the creation of life on earth. If the *yakshis*, the mother goddesses and the rivers represent *prakriti* or the female principle connoting energy, vitality and diversity of form and nature in its manifold aspects, then *purusha*, the male principle, is just as essential. Throughout Indian thought and art, and in all the philosophical systems, the two are interdependent and indispensable to each other. In some philosophical schools, the male principle is changing and dynamic; in others, it is the opposite.

Nature as *prakriti* provides one central theme in Indian art. Man as *purusha* provides the second, complementary theme. The Indian mind conceives of the cosmos as a man standing within a circle. Space, directions, the planets, the sun and the moon, and the elements surround him. This concept is also known to other ancient religions. In India, it constitutes the basis of a massive body of myth, legend and art motifs. The segments of the circle are four or eight. They are personified as the guardians of directions of space. The elements are five: water (*varuna*), air (*vayu*), fire (*agni*), space (*akasha*) and earth (*prithvi*). Then there are the signs of the Zodiac, and the planets. The sun is the centre and in a commanding position. Man as the microcosm and the macrocosm is mentioned in Indian literature and art from the earliest times. The *Rig Veda* provides the basis of the concept of *prithvi* —its totality as *prakriti* and *purusha*. Indian art takes the theme and the symbolism of the concept further in all schools and in all art forms, ranging from architecture to music, in all ages.

Man in space and man in relation to the cosmos, imbued with breath (*prana*) and encompassed by the elements, quarters and planets, is one aspect: man in relation to man and in the course of his life is the other. Since life on earth is comprehended as one form transmuting into another, the goals of life are also not world-denying but world-transcending. Man comprises the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual. He is a composite of the gross and the subtle bodies, and his senses and his emotions are the driving forces.

Naturally, such a world-view leads to the articulation of the conception of the four goals of life, all of which require discipline and balance. Likewise, man can achieve enlightenment and liberation, here and now, from the "so muchness" of life, through a balanced cultivation of the life of the senses—the life of action with duty and power—and he can will it through the life of negation by being an ascetic.

Indian aesthetic theory derives directly from this world-view. The content of art is the world of sense perceptions—the pursuit of duty, power, pleasure—all in harmonious balance, always keeping in view that these are multiple forms also of the one indivisible unity. In artistic terms, life is comparable to the spectrum of the rainbow, comprising different colours and patterns, and yet never oblivious of the white luminosity which is the source and to which it must return. There are seven or eight basic moods (*rasas*), ranging from love and heroism and valour to pathos, compassion, humour, laughter, fear, disgust and wonder. There are the eight types of heroes (*nayakas*) and heroines (*nayikas*), the principal modes of melody (*ragas*), and the changing seasons of the annual cycle—the twelve months. This impersonalised typology provides for a fantastic variety of themes, forms and techniques. From the earliest times, Indian sculpture and painting portray domestic life in simple homes or courts, wars, battles, heroic tales, romantic stories, of love in separation and union, all within the framework of the typology of the mood or states, heroes, heroines, model or melodic forms (*ragas*) and seasons. This typology accounts for the easy assimilation of many new themes and techniques, some indigenous, others foreign. Gradually but surely, they fell into place in the fundamental paradigm of the four goals of life, the four stages of life and the two paths (*margas*) of knowledge (*jnana*) or devotion (*bhakti*).



4

The division of life and art into categories based on binary opposites is only one dimension of the Indian world-view. The sacred and the profane, the celestial or the terrestrial, the religious or the mundane, are differentiated categories, but are always viewed in a relationship of complementarity rather than as polarities. Thus one element can be transmuted into the other and *vice versa*. The sensuous can become devotional, the devotional spiritual, the physical meta-physical. Understandably, the embracing couple (*mithuna*) as a motif is multi-dimensional, representing both the human and the divine.

The cosmic man is the symbol of the universal order (*rita*) in its unending rhythm, evolution and devolution, creation and destruction, comprising time past, present and future—the three *kalas*; space consisting of the netherworld, earth and sky; the forces of inertia, action and release; the states of sleep, dream and awakening; the five sheaths of consciousness and the three phases of the day. The *Vishvarupa*—the cosmic manifestation of Vishnu — mentioned in its incipient form in the *Upanishads* is articulated powerfully in the *Gita* and in turn becomes the theme of powerful Indian sculpture, where Vishnu is seen in his multi-forms with teeming life around him, containing all manifest diversity and symbolizing unity. The binary opposition, or the complimentarity, of *purusha* and *prakriti* finds another statement, and now it is the principle of the many and the one, the diverse manifest and the unmanifest or uncreate. The triads, or the multiples of five, provide other paradigms, for there are three worlds (*triloka*), the three orders of time (*trikala*), the three phases of day (*trisandhya*), the three faces (*trimurti*), and the three mighty steps (*trivikrama*), along with the three primordial qualities (*triguna*), and the five sheaths (*koshas*).

From the fourth century onwards, Indian art incorporates these postulates through an extensive body of mythology revolving around the three principal deities: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, particulary the latter two. The pattern of the myth, however, is clear and unequivocal in each case. It begins with the unmanifest or water principle, the aniconical stone, column or tree, and gradually develops into multiple forms called incarnations (*avataras*), as in the case of the principal deities, or personifications of other natural phenomena.

The myths of Vishnu and Shiva are fundamental. In the case of Vishnu, the evolutionary process is the model. The primeval waters of the universe are churned: the elixir of life is obtained, but not before the deadly poison (*kalakuta*) surfaces and the dross is destroyed. Many sculptures and innumerable paintings depict this episode of the churning of the ocean for the elixir (*amrita-manthana*), where a



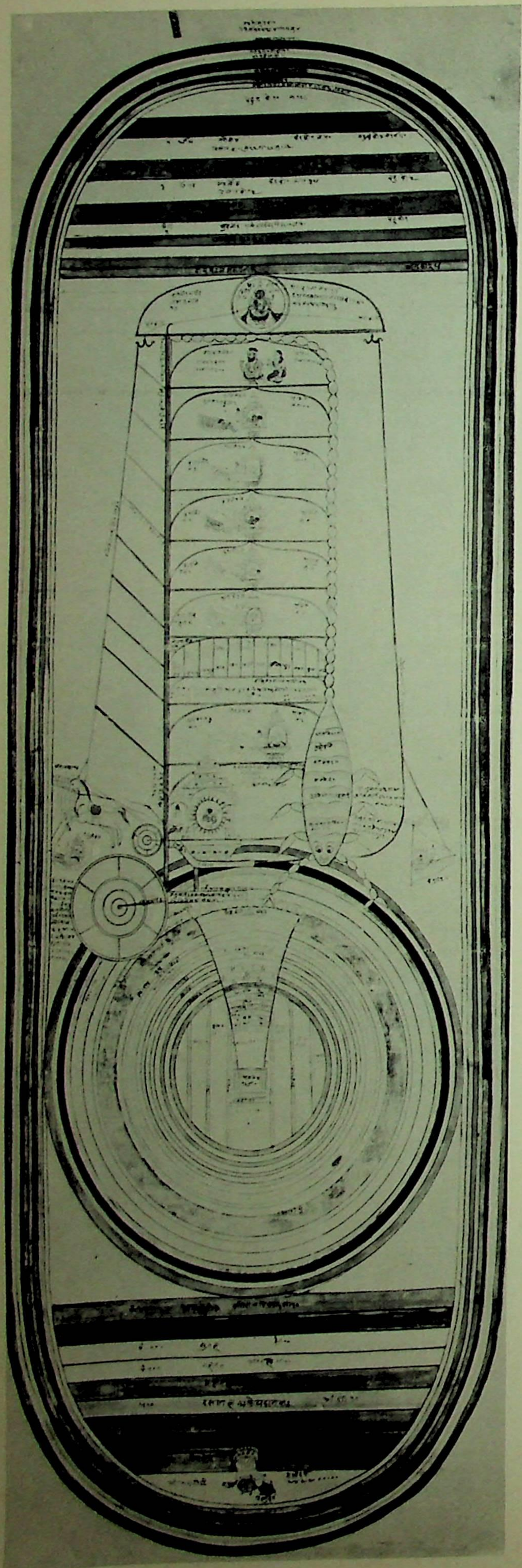
5

2 *Ashoka* tree
2nd century A.D., Kushana period, provenance unknown
Red sandstone; 66 x 89 x 25 cms.
Government Museum, Mathura

3 Coiled *naga*
7th-8th century, early Chalukya, Alampur
Red sandstone; 125 x 85 cms.
Archaeological Museum,
Alampur

4 Radha and Krishna
Folio from a *Rasikapriya* manuscript
c. 1630-40, Mewar, Rajasthan School
Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute
Jodhpur

5 Mother Goddess
1st century BC, Shunga period, Sar-Dehri (Pakistan)
Terracotta; 25 cms. high
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



column is shown as the churning rod, symbolizing the centre of the earth.

The myth of Shiva moves from the unmanifest uncreate to the state of bi-unity, and ultimately to multiplicity and oneness. The *linga* is the primary aniconic form and in some ways corresponds to the column, post or pillar of the Vishnu myth. This stone phallus is also the counterpart of the primordial stone. The *linga*, symbol of the conservation of energy, has the power to withhold and to give, to create and to destroy, and to transmute the dross into the sublime. The three primordial qualities (*triguna*), the three orders of the universe (*triloka*), and the three orders of time (*trikala*) are contained in him, as they are in Vishnu in his aspect of Trivikrama. The *linga* sometimes has one face, at other times four, facing the four quarters. The four faces are the directions or the compass, and the fifth is the unmanifest *linga* itself.

Shiva is the symbol of sexual bi-unity, and therefore beyond the duality of Shiva and Shakti, corresponding to man and nature (*purusha* and *prakriti*), for both are within him.

Shiva ultimately is Nataraja, symbolizing the dance of the cosmos, the rhythm of the movement of the sun and moon, the earth, the wind and the skies, and the pulsation of time: past, present and future. He dances accompanied by the Seven Mothers (*saptamatrikas*), or alone; he rides on the bull Nandi, his own ego, which bears him and the world to the final liberation (*moksha*). The dance of Shiva is the unique plastic statement of this universal complexity, where all forms manifest dissolve into the moment of eternal stillness through disciplined ceaseless movement.

Kapila Vatsyayan

6 Diagram of the path of the planets
c. 1750, Deccan or Tamil Nadu
160 x 48 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum
London

7 Lord of the Dance, Nataraja
10th century, Chola period
Tamil Nadu
Bronze; 86 x 72 x 22 cms.
National Museum, New Delhi



Concept and Installation

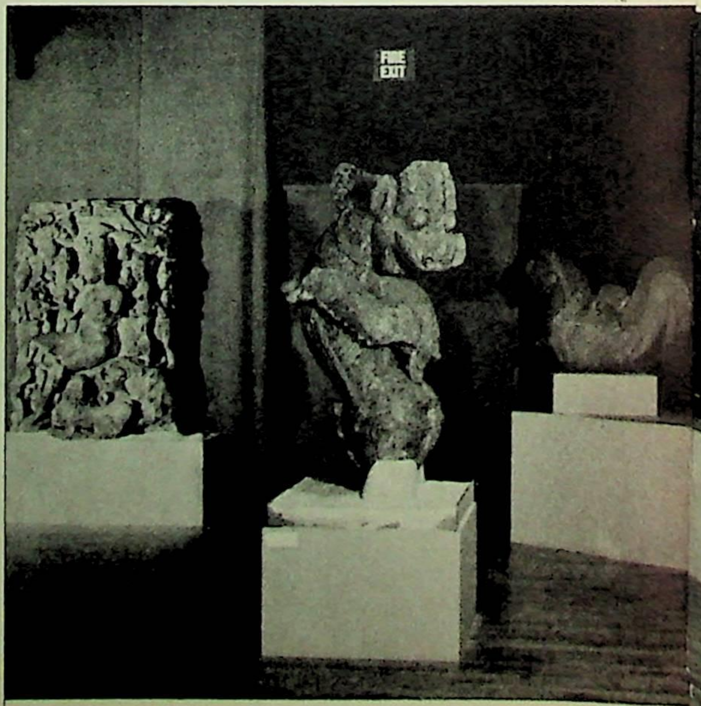
The exhibition "In the Image of Man" was conceived, planned and—as far as possible—mounted in a thematic manner. Such a statement may appear clear enough, but in fact the concept presented difficulties in the translation from idea to reality such as few exhibition organisers have previously had to confront. Why should this have been?

In the first place, scholars, art-historians, lecturers, museologists and the culture-conscious public at large are for the most part trained to investigate, display and view works of art from a specific logical standpoint, namely, the chronological. Conventional scholarship has virtually always insisted upon this discipline: confronted with seeming disorder, the trained intellect seeks, finds and establishes—or imposes—a logical order. This habit is not easy to break. Nor should it be broken, for without such progressive, linear modes of perception and categorisation, our knowledge would still be in its infancy. Nevertheless, a distinction must be drawn between knowledge on the one hand and understanding on the other. It is one thing to have the gift of all true scholars, that of establishing a historical sequence of events and of the related art-historical process; this is essential. It is quite another to be able, in addition, to grasp, encapsulate and communicate an understanding of the cultural content of the artistic output of a civilisation. Nowhere is this more true—or more necessary—than in the case of Indian art, which is still being painstakingly sorted and arranged in terms of chronology by thousands of scholars (myself included) all over the world, and yet is so little understood as a visually coherent expression of a nation's cultural identity. Overblown and fanciful expositions do, of course, abound. They have little or no recourse to historical fact, or even to visual evidence, and dwell upon "inner meaning", "significant relationships" and so forth, obfuscating all semblance of reality. Indian art and mythology do, unfortunately, invite and attract every conceivable misinterpretation, from the crazed abuse of the *svastika* to the soft-minded mysticism of packaged spirituality. It is to be expected, therefore, and welcomed that mainstream scholarship should adhere to its tried and proven methods of linear chronological analysis.

However, a purely historical arrangement of artefacts—though tracing a necessary path of reason through the confusing mass of Indian and pseudo-Indian ideas which have so bewildered the average Western amateur of the fine arts—will not promote an understanding of the cultural realities of which the artefacts are expressions. And no one would deny that one of the principal aims of the Festival of India was to promote precisely this kind of understanding. A thematic presentation of historical Indian art was therefore the proper method to adopt, in which the most salient preoccupations of the Indian mind for the past two thousand years, as reflected in art, should be grouped together and interconnected in a cultural continuum. Art objects from various periods and of differing provenance would thus inevitably be placed side by side in the interest of communicating a more profound insight into the nature and purpose of that art. This being a new departure in major international exhibitions, a special catalogue was prepared, also along thematic lines, which dwelt more upon the cultural background (mostly theology and mythology) from which the exhibits emerged than upon the technicalities of chronology and stylistic development, many of which are in any case still the subjects of academic controversy. This catalogue developed into a textbook requiring considerable study; it was not a simple handbook. However, the published catalogue remained a valuable sourcebook after the exhibition itself had closed, and one college at least has, to my knowledge, included it as required reading in its syllabus. It was assumed at the outset that such an innovatory method would raise considerable comment, and the team involved in creating the exhibition and its catalogue applied themselves to meeting this challenge to the full extent of their concerted powers of technical skill, organisational ability and scholarship.

Two Advisory Committees were formed, one Indian and the other British, with liaison conducted largely through the personnel and facilities of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of India, the Arts Council of Great Britain and the British Council. A team of researchers travelled India searching for suitably representative works of art, and several works were added through the strenuous and generous efforts of the Government of India. This theoretical assemblage of sculptures, bronzes and paintings was then organised, with the aid of photographs and tables of dimensions, into divisions representing the most prominent themes of Indian religion and civilisation over the past two thousand years. Each individual piece in this vast collection was then regarded critically from two main points of view: first in relation to spaces and weight-bearing areas available in the Hayward Gallery (where the exhibition was to be mounted) in London's South Bank cultural complex; and then in relation to each other in a culturally continuous order, in coherent symbolic groupings, and also individually





from the analytical viewpoint of iconography. From these considerations, after much discussion, the basis for the design of the exhibition and the complementary structure of the catalogue were planned. Thereafter, within the organisational framework provided by the Indian and British governments, individuals and organisations settled to the task of creating the great exhibition that was to be the central event of the Festival of India and the biggest and most overwhelming display of historical Indian art ever to be seen outside India itself.

While the working list of objects to be displayed was still being increased from an original three hundred to the final five hundred pieces, the exhibition designer, Mr. Ross Owen Feller, in consultation with scholars, both in Britain and in India, set about creating a spatial interpretation of the culture of two millennia in the five main galleries of the Hayward. Even before the material itself began arriving from India, the designer created a complete model, on a scale of 1:50, of the exhibition galleries and all the pieces to be displayed in it. Basing his working interpretation of the concept of the exhibition upon his own experience of India, discussions with scholars and a great deal of private study, he created a design which took into account the problems set by the spatial limitations of the gallery building and the needs of the visiting public, and yet followed geometric principles drawn from authentic Indian thought and planning. A colour scheme was devised and cloth hangings purchased in India to add depth and vibrancy to the themes.

The sequence of presentation, each stage with its characteristic geometry and dominant colour, then ran as follows. From Nature (brown) to Man (red); passing the paintings of Life at Court arranged around a courtyard with carved Gujarati columns, windows and door and a central fountain; to Devotion and on to Enlightenment which, being essentially represented by Buddhist and Jaina pieces, was organised in an apsidal enclosure with a *pradakshina* or ambulatory path around it. This was connected to the specifically Hindu cults by a corridor-display of the Cosmic Order theme, on to a linear arrangement of the *avataras* or incarnations, of Vishnu, leading back to the colossal main image of the god (dominant colour: blue). The climax of the exhibition then followed with the *sandhya*-colours of sunrise and sunset enclosing Shiva in a *mandala* pattern bisected by various visual lines of sight.

The final mounting of the exhibition was accomplished with superb energy and professional improvisation in an astoundingly short space of time. Overnight, the apparent chaos of mechanics, structures, gang-planks, lifts and scaffolding vanished. One of the motivating forces at the centre of the conceptual framework of this exhibition was that of Dr. Kapila Vatsyayana. Dr. George Michell played a major and essential role in the realisation of this massive undertaking as did Mrs. Dalu Jones and Dr. Linda Leach. The finesse, organisational skill and sustained energy of Ms. Catherine Lampert, Exhibition Organiser for the Arts Council of Great Britain, were a source of inspiration to us all.

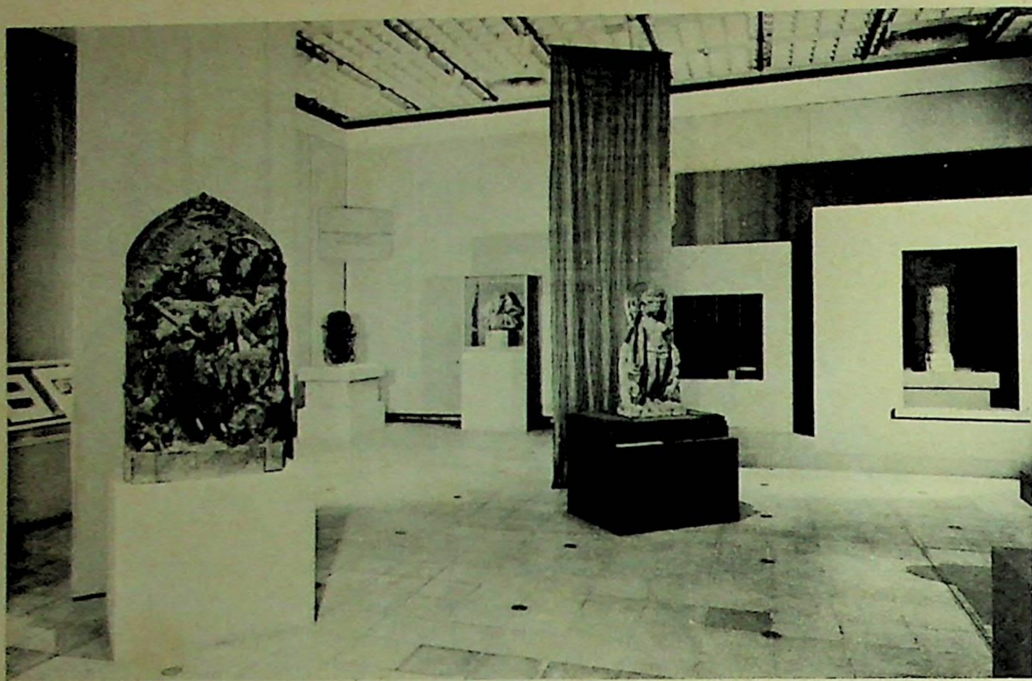
As one of the main contributors to the catalogue, my task was in some ways parallel to that of the designer: how can one best interpret Indian art to a lay Western readership? Grasping the thematic concept of the exhibition presented no problem, as this is the fundamental approach that I adopt in introducing my students to the subject of Indian religious symbolism. The problem lay in selecting a suitable style and deciding upon the intelligence level at which to pitch the text. Too many exhibition catalogues seem to be aimed at clever teenagers who appear to wish for nothing more than a quick assimilation of dates and dimensions. It did not take long to settle for absolute clarity of style but using a diction which would involve the reader at a human level with Indian concepts in such a way that he or she would be able to assimilate them as relevant to his or her own problems in living a full life; in other words, it was to be a style pertinent to the immediate basic concerns of everyone. After all, no living culture on earth contains such a long experience of the human condition as does the Indian. To a certain degree, this also decided the intelligence factor: I had to assume that all who wanted to read the catalogue would expect to encounter a number of intercultural difficulties with which they would be willing to grapple in order to gain some understanding. The text was therefore directed at the willing intelligence of a literate and imaginative readership.

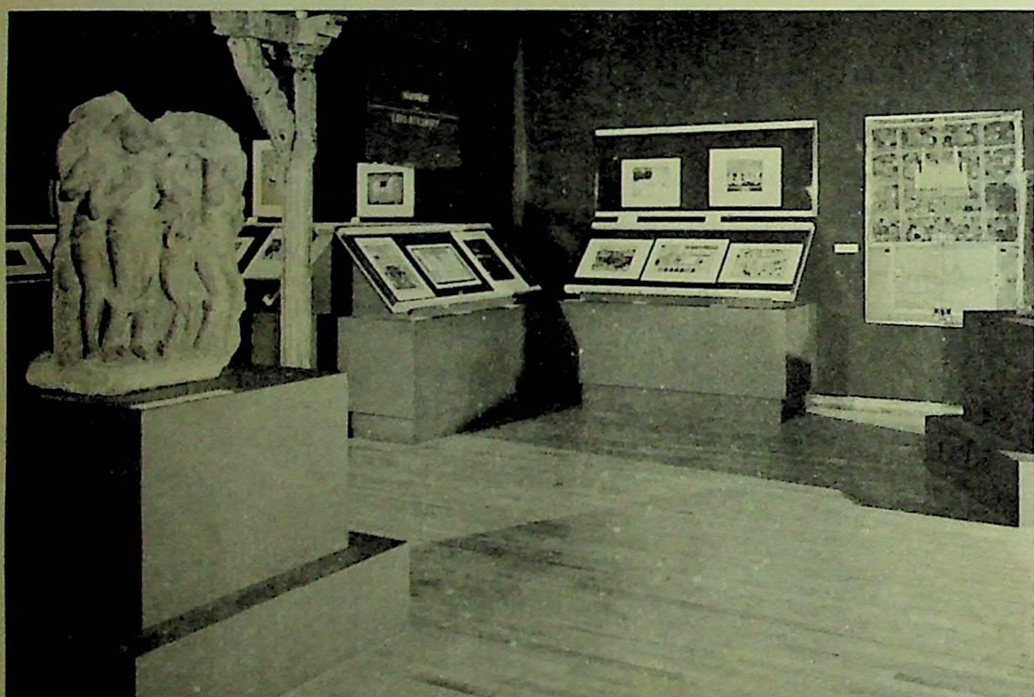
The resultant text, although shortened and lacking many of the translated Sanskrit passages which were edited out, has a narrative quality, divided by main themes and sub-themes. It is essentially an expression in words of the concept which the exhibition conveyed through visual impact, with explanations of the theological and mythological symbolism that forms both the ideological background and the cultural purpose of the art-objects themselves.

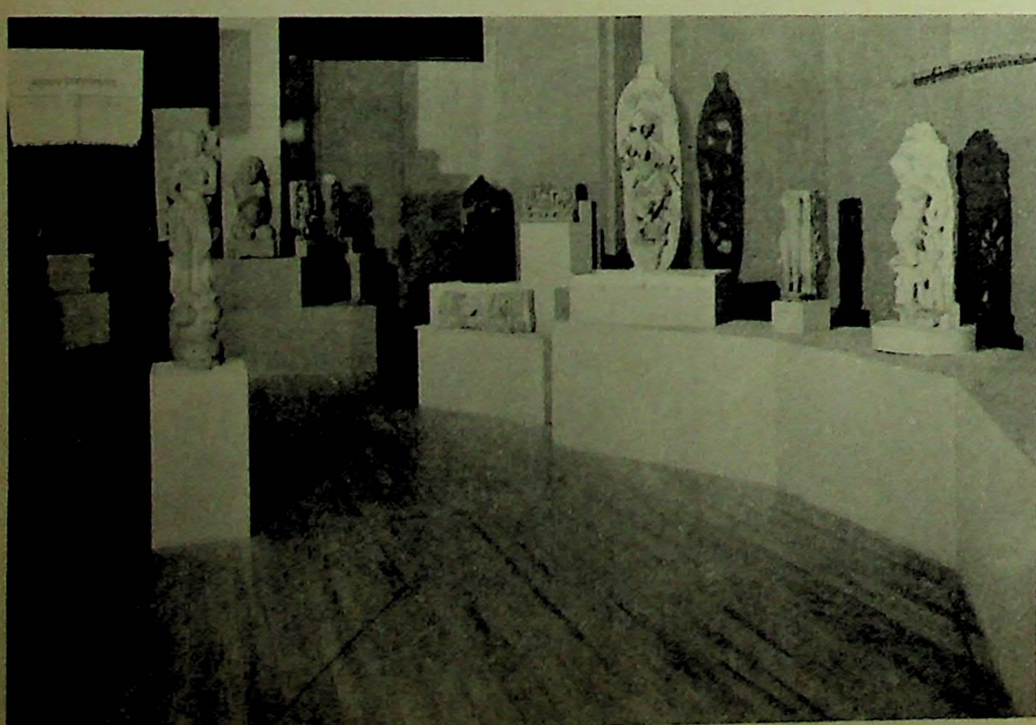
It is relevant here, since it gave rise to considerable comment, to remark upon the name of the exhibition, which is also the title of the catalogue. I feel obliged to make some remarks on this matter because the title, "In the Image of Man" was given to the whole event by myself. For reasons that I cannot fathom, various critics of the feminist persuasion have taken this form of words to imply some kind of





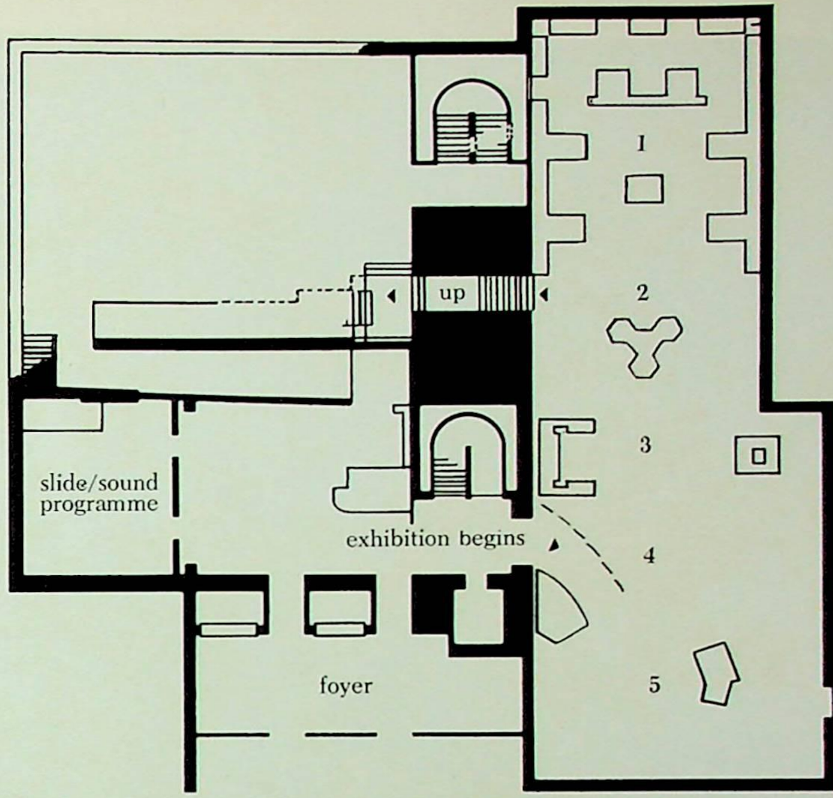




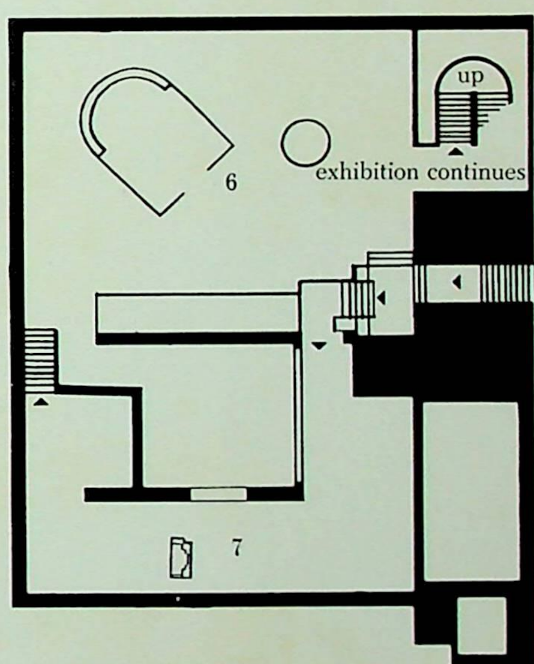


male-chauvinistic attitude. The word "Man", although quite clearly masculine in gender, has long been understood to refer to the human race; the first and basic meaning given under the heading *man* in the Oxford English Dictionary is "a human being (irrespective of sex or age)". From the Vedic age onward, elemental forces and divine powers have been imagined and depicted in India with human attributes. The cosmogonic *Purusha-Sukta,* The Hymn of Man, of the *Rigveda* provides the clearest evidence of the dominant concept of the *purusha* behind all manifestation in Indian thought from very early times. But this is an argument that has suffered already too much from over-exposure and my point is made. There was also a remark that many of the exhibits were anything but in the image of man, being half-man and half-snake, half-man and half-beast, half-man and half-woman. My reply was that, while the "halves" were of various creatures, the constant half was Man. My purpose in choosing the title was to suggest, strongly, that the exhibition, and Indian art in general, could and should cause us to reflect upon the nature of humanity. Every *yogi* has a physical body and an animal self which he transcends in order to achieve his (or, in the case of a woman *yogini,* her) spiritual potential. Indian art challenges Western people as no other art can; the invitation and the challenge, implied in the title of the exhibition, was to see what of themselves Western spectators of Indian imagery could detect in it; and to ask themselves why so venerable a civilisation as that of India should transmute the human form into so many shapes and multiples of itself. To make this basic enquiry of oneself is to take a first step towards an understanding of this powerful artistic tradition. Many visitors to the exhibition declared themselves "overwhelmed" by the experience of it; one can only hope that some reflection upon the title of the exhibition might lead them to ask *why* they felt so overwhelmed.

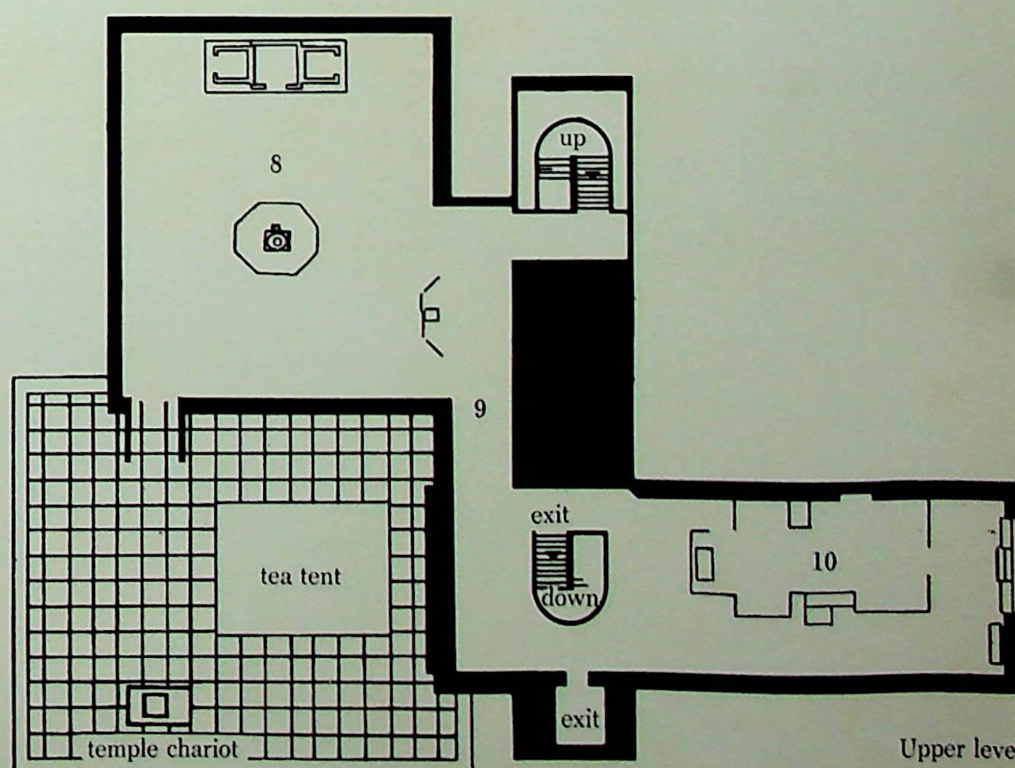
Thomas Stuart Maxwell



Lower Level



Intermediary level



Upper level

Plan of the exhibition

Lower Level
1 Life at Court
2 The Four Goals of Life
3 Man in the Cosmos
4 Abundance of Life
5 The Natural Life

Intermediary level
6 Enlightenment
7 Devotion

Upper level
8 Mythology of Shiva and the Goddess
9 Universal Order
10 Mythology of Vishnu



Sculpture

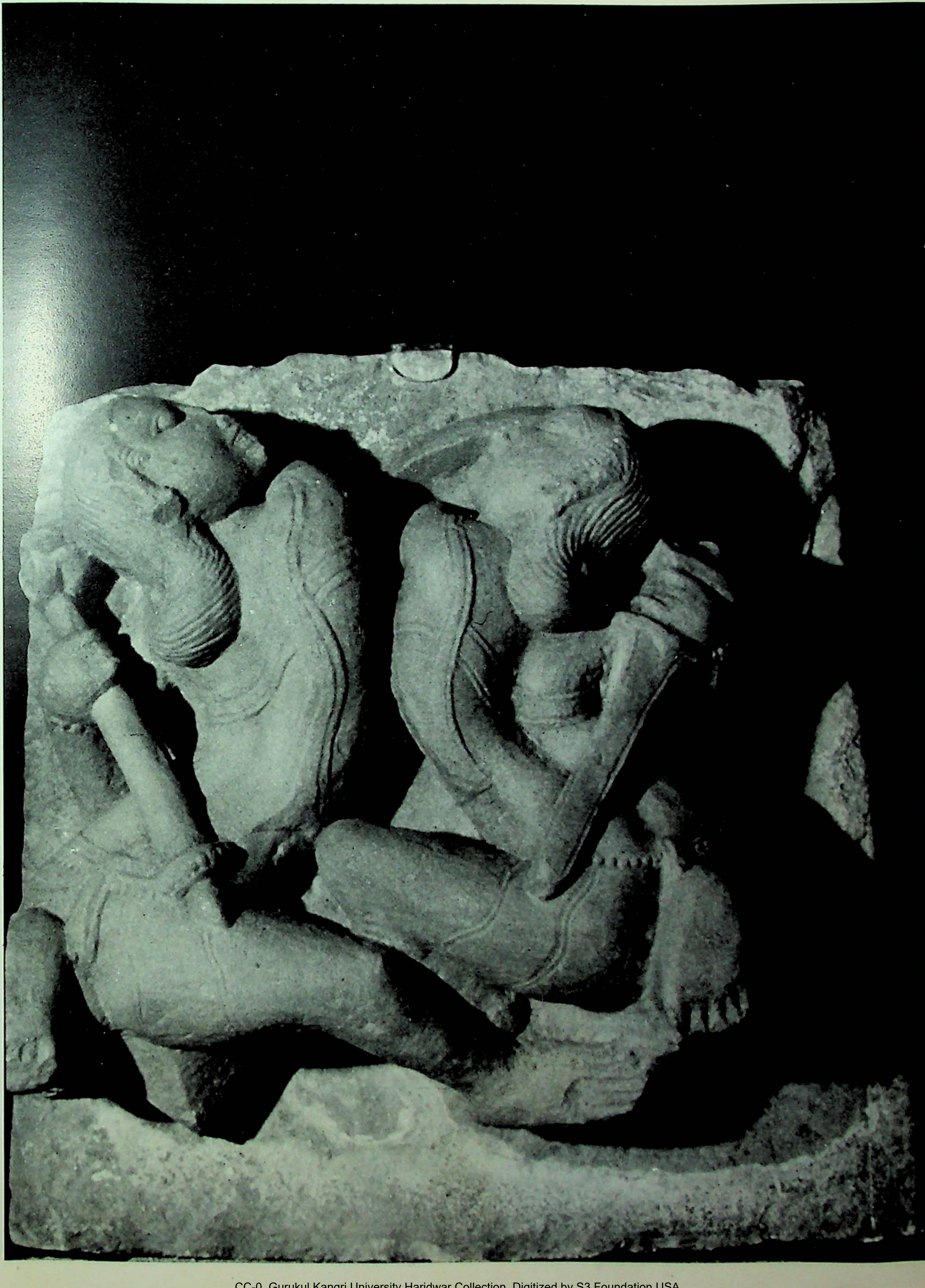
The superb collection of Indian sculptures assembled for the Hayward Gallery exhibition, "In the Image of Man," was one of the glories of the Festival of India in London. Probably the largest and most spectacular group of images ever brought together for any single exhibition of Indian art, it provided a unique opportunity for appreciating the genius of the Indian sculptor as expressed in a wide range of techniques and styles. Though the layout of the exhibition was dominated by the thematic progression of ideas illustrating the conceptual basis of Indian philosophy and religion, the sculptures themselves provided a vivid testimony to the consistency of imagery through more than two thousand years of artistic production. From depictions of vegetal forms, animals and birds, to images of the Buddhist and the Jaina saviours or of the great gods and goddesses of the different cults of Hinduism, Indian sculpture in the Hayward Gallery emerged as one of the world's great plastic traditions. Here a vivid naturalism was seen to contrast with a severely abstract stylization; a dynamic realization of movement was juxtaposed with an introspective stillness; and an intimate humanity complemented the visualization of remote esoteric doctrines. To the visitor uninitiated into the joys of Indian sculpture, therefore, the Hayward Gallery exhibition provided an extraordinary occasion for comprehending the immense scope of Indian sculpture through some of its greatest masterpieces.

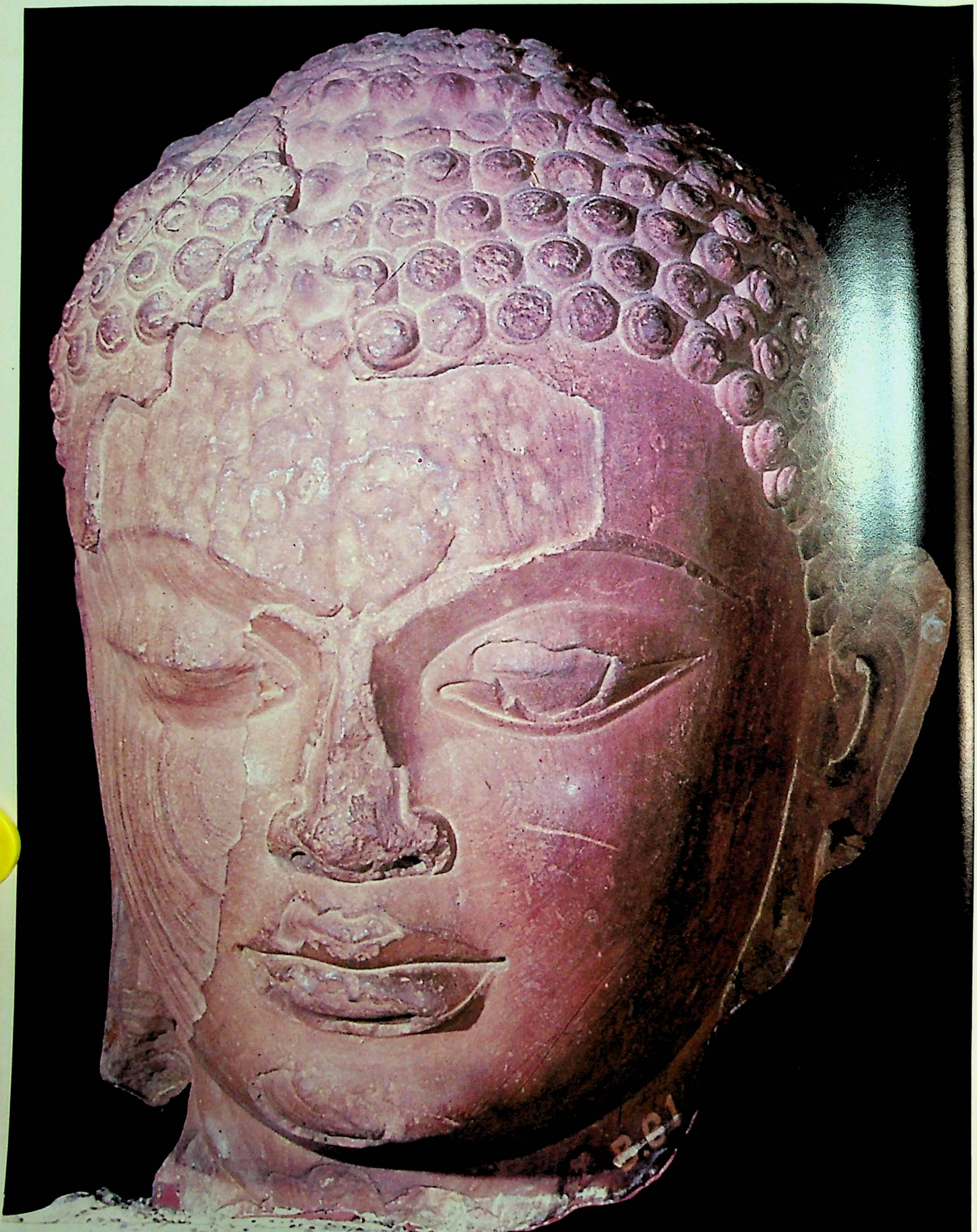
The selection committees in Delhi and London considered seriously only top-quality sculptures from collections in India and Great Britain. Wherever possible, little-known and newly discovered pieces from the archaeological-site museums were favoured. As a result, more than two hundred and fifty sculptures formed a highly original assemblage and included many little-published and unstudied items as well as some surprises from well-known collections which had never before been properly shown. Thus the Hayward Gallery exhibition was able to "create" some new masterpieces—the great Tirthankara head from the Government Museum at Mathura or the flying aerial warriors from the Archaeological Museum at Khajuraho, for instance. Not only this; the exhibition attempted to correct the bias in many previous presentations of sculpture toward stressing the earlier periods of Indian art. Here there was ample opportunity to perceive the greatness of the so-called "medieval" periods, particularly the styles of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries such as the Hoysala, the Chandela and the Eastern Ganga, and even some less known schools like the Kakatiya and the Late Chalukya. Clearly, the genius of Indian sculpture by no means ended with the Guptas.

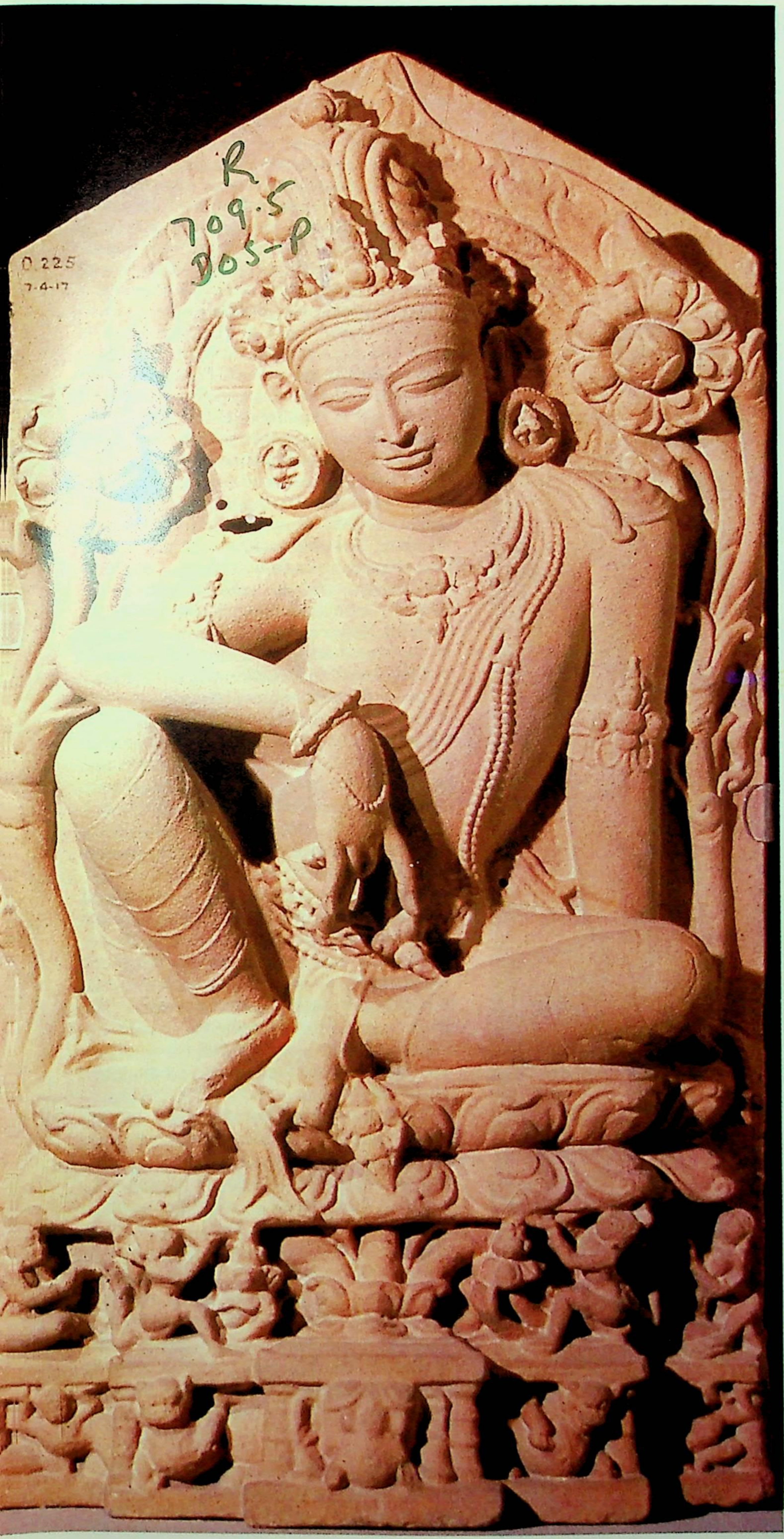
Differences in technique and material, too, were stressed in the exhibition: this was not merely a collection of sandstone and limestone panels. The more intractable granite or the softer and more flexible chlorite, for example, were well represented, and of course the great bronzes were a highlight of the show. These included some exquisite pieces inlaid with silver and gold, from Kashmir and eastern India. Terracotta, too, appeared, either modelled as early "mother goddesses" or carved as bricks from eighteenth-century Bengali temples. Wood and ivory were also not omitted.

1 Devotee holding a *chauri*
8th century, Maitraka period
Bronze; 24 cms. high
Museum and Picture Gallery, Baroda

2 *Shalabhanjika*
c. 1st-2nd century, Kushana period
Red sandstone; 77 cms. high
Government Museum, Mathura







that was to dominate Indian art for the next two thousand years.

For a later variation of the same theme the exhibition presented a newly discovered bracket figure from a twelfth-century Late Chalukya temple at Telasang, now in the Government Museum at Bangalore. Carved in almost full relief out of green schist, this richly jewelled and costumed dancing girl paces out the steps of her dance. The face is remarkable: the smoothly rounded features and finely etched eyebrows and lips portray a female sensuality hardly achieved in any other art form. The surrounding frame is provided with minutely carved roundels containing miniature dancers and foliation.

As another part of this subject, the abundance of life, the exhibition presented a charming example of flying figures. The aerial warriors from the Archaeological Museum at Khajuraho present all that is best in the eleventh-century Chandela style — the lyrical postures, curved limbs, gracious dynamism, full modelling and subtle facial expressions. This piece represents, on a miniature scale, the same features as the celebrated sculptures on the nearby temples from which this fragment comes. Of all the carvings in the Hayward Gallery this example was selected for the cover of the catalogue and also for the publicity poster.

Expanding outwards from the natural world, the exhibition illustrated the theme of man in the cosmos. Here were presented the various manifestations of the universe such as the *dikpalas* — the guardians of the directions of space. Perhaps the most spectacular set of *dikpalas* to have been discovered anywhere in India is that now displayed in the Orissa State Museum at Bhubaneshwar. Found buried near the eleventh-century Rajarani temple, these completely preserved chlorite carvings are hardly known. In the exhibition, it was probably the figure of Indra that created the strongest impression. Here the god of the heavens raises his thunderbolt high while retaining a detached and serene expression. The attendant figures and the elephant mount are all carved in the finest detail.

In the next section of the exhibition the world of man was depicted. Many of the sculptures displayed here were particularly concerned with devotion, and showed various saints, holy men and devotees of India. Among the latter was a superb eighth-century western Indian miniature bronze

5 A Jain Tirthankara
c. 5th century, Gupta period, Uttar Pradesh
Red sandstone; 71 x 54 x 56 cms.
Government Museum, Mathura

6 Padmapani Avalokiteshvara
c. 1100
Sandstone; 71 x 39 x 20 cms.
Government Museum, Lucknow

of the Maitraka period from the Museum and Picture Gallery in Baroda. Though only 24 cms. high, this finely modelled figure holding a *chauri* or fly-whisk sways slightly, tilting her sensual body, rich jewels and long tassels.

From the theme of devotion, the exhibition moved on to the subject of enlightenment as realized in the arts of Buddhism and Jainism. One of the most powerful images in the exhibition was a huge fifth-century sandstone head, more than 70 cms. high, from the Government Museum at Mathura. This fragment of a colossal Jaina figure, probably in meditation posture, illustrates well the fixed inward gaze so characteristic of these religious arts in the Gupta period. Despite the exfoliation of the sandstone, the majesty of this head is undeniable. Of particular interest is the manner in which the natural grain of the stone is utilised.

As an example of a complete Buddha figure from the same period, the Sarnath Archaeological Museum sculpture is outstanding. This sixth-century piece is carved in the golden sandstone characteristic of the region, and is modelled in gently rounded contours. The simplicity of the standing figure and the gentle introspection of the facial expression are key features in the Sarnath style. Unusual is the elliptical shape of the surrounding frame.

In this section of the exhibition narrative scenes from Buddhist art were also included. Not only were some celebrated limestone panels (now, sadly, disintegrating) from Amaravati available from the British Museum in London; it was also possible to show examples from the less-known site of Nagarjunakonda.

Dating from the Ikshvaku period (third and fourth centuries), one limestone panel from the Archaeological Museum at Nagarjunakonda was chosen for its vivid representation of the enlightenment of the Buddha and other narrative scenes. The lively naturalism of the figures and the variety of their postures and compositions are characteristic features of the Buddhist art of the Deccan.

Some centuries later the same Deccan region fostered a powerful art of Jaina image-making. Dating from the twelfth century—the Late Chalukya period—the standing Parshvanatha sculpture from the store-room of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London displays Jaina art at its best. Strictly rigid yet powerfully compelling, this glistening basalt image is typical of a series of naked saviours produced in stone and bronze at this time. As is well known, Jaina art provides many of the rare instances of the male nude in Indian sculptures, and led occasionally to



7 The Buddha
6th century, Gupta period
105 cms. high
Archaeological Museum, Sarnath

the creation of colossal monolithic carvings as at Shravana Belgola.

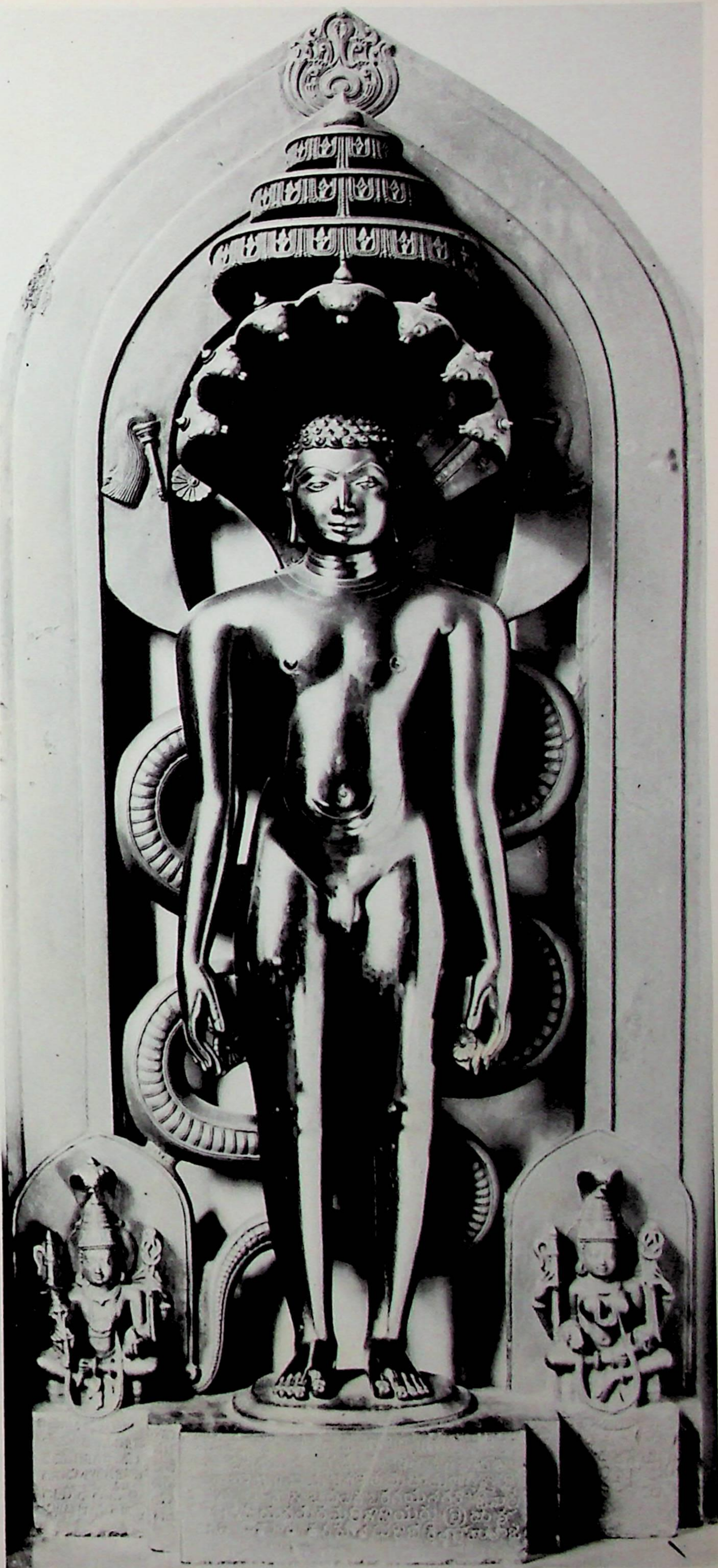
Another outstanding masterpiece exhibited in the Buddhist and Jaina room was the seated image of Padmapani Avalokiteshvara from the Government Museum at Lucknow dated to about 1100. Softly carved in pale yellow sandstone, the seated figure of the saviour leans gently to one side. His refined but detached expression is one of compassion and immeasurable charity for all the suffering souls trapped in the cycle of transmigration.

From the world of men, saviours and saints, the exhibition then progressed to the mythological realm of the gods and goddesses of Hinduism. In fact, the whole upper floor of the Hayward Gallery was given over to a generous selection of images associated with the cults of Vishnu, Shiva and the Goddess. Among the many sculptures of Vishnu and his various incarnations, was the superb bronze icon of Krishna subduing the serpent-demon Kaliya from the National Museum in Delhi. One of the finest of all Chola bronzes from the tenth and eleventh centuries, this example demonstrates the rounded modelling, delicate facial expression and detailed costume characteristic of Chola bronzes. There is the poised dance movement of the figure and the elegantly draped serpent body hanging downwards as well.

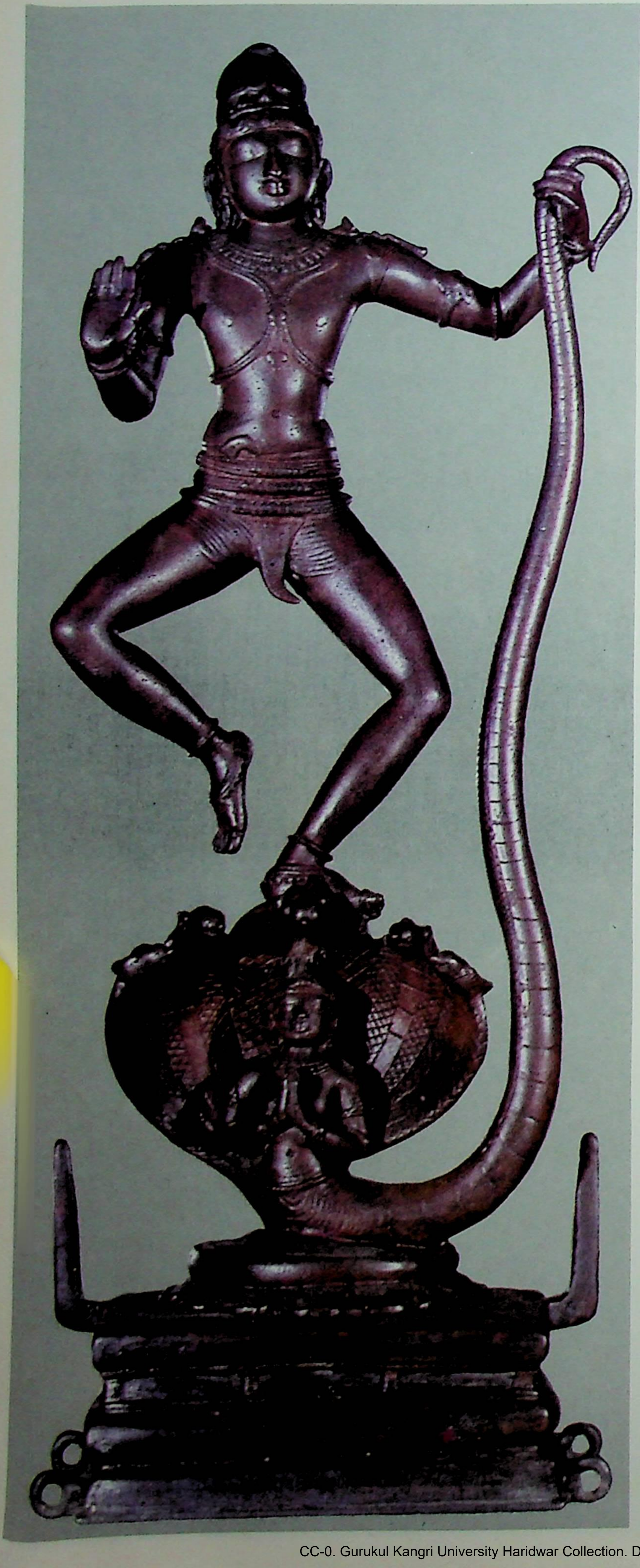
Belonging to the mythology of the Goddess comes a remarkable sculpture from the store-room of the British Museum in London representing Chamunda and dating from the ninth-tenth century. Though only preserved as a fragment, this powerful sandstone image is a fitting visualisation of the cosmic power of the Goddess. The skeletal head and torso, the multiple arms, the garlands of skulls and the open mouth are intended to instil awe and terror in the humble devotee.

Coming now to the various appearances of Shiva and his consort Parvati, the exhibition included one of the recently discovered tenth-century sandstone panels from Hinglajgarh (Madhya Pradesh) now displayed in the Central Museum at Indore. These finely carved panels include an example showing Shiva and Parvati riding on Nandi. The surrounding attendant figures are clearly depicted and there is an astonishing attention to detail and clarity in the carving. Particularly noticeable is the intense gaze between the divine couple who appear transfixed by their intense devotion to one another.

Dominating all the sculptures in the Shiva room were the superlative eleventh-century Chola images of Shiva and his consort. Lent by the Thanjavur Art Gallery, these masterpieces of Indian bronze art



8 Parshvanatha, the 23rd Tirthankara
12th century, Late Chalukya, Gulbarga (Karnataka)
Black basalt; 150 x 66 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



9

were among the highlights of the exhibition. Justly celebrated for their elegant and poised postures, the fullness of their modelling, the subtlety of facial expression and the delicacy of the jewellery, costumes and headdress, this pair of large bronzes (the Shiva figure is more than 1 m. high), on their own, would have justified a major exhibition. For those who had not undertaken a journey to Thanjavur, they were a total revelation.

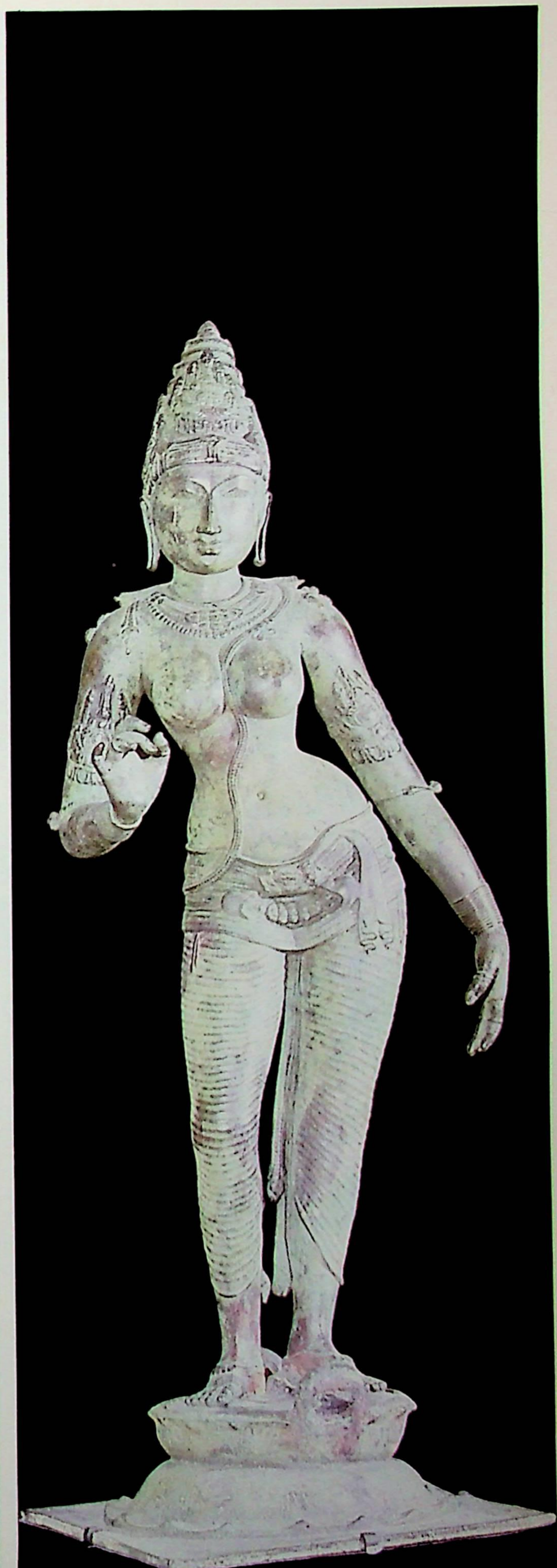
Though perhaps only a few London gallery-goers could have comprehended the immense efforts of the Indian Government to bring to London these and many other superb sculptures from more than forty museums all over India, certainly it was not difficult to be overwhelmed by the qualities of the sculptures themselves. Probably never again in the foreseeable future will so many great masterpieces be assembled at an exhibition in a foreign capital; hopefully, though, it may be possible to mount an equally impressive show within India some time soon.

George Michell

9 Krishna subduing the serpent demon, Kaliya
10-11th century, Chola period
59 cms. high
National Museum, New Delhi

10 Shiva and consort
11th century, Chola period
108 cms. high and 93 cms. high
Thanjavur Art Gallery, Thanjavur







1



2

Painting

The tradition of Indian miniature painting is relatively short-lived; over a few centuries, artists developed from largely meeting the religious needs of the Jaina community to doing more overtly expressionistic works for Hindu patrons. Then, in response to new social pressures in the Mughal period, regional schools rapidly evolved that had diverse values. While the Jaina or Hindu art of the late Sultanate period is remarkably unified, considering the divisions of political power, the painting of the Mughal era is varied, and states within a few miles of each other, such as Basohli and Bilaspur, produced compositions in quite different styles. Strong patronage as well as particular associations with the Mughal court helped to determine the direction of each school. This diversity is one of the main signs demonstrating the maturity and strength attained by the short tradition.

In 1947, the year of Indian Independence, "Art of India and Pakistan", an extensive exhibition of Indian art, held in London, provided an impressive view of different types of painting—Mughal, Rajput, and Deccani. In 1982, the vitality of the regional differences was again emphasized by the choice of paintings for the Hayward Gallery, and, as in 1947, precise naturalistic works and bold abstractions were both included in the selection. The 1982 exhibition showed, moreover, that the study of Indian painting has developed in numerous ways during the intervening years. Many significant styles that were unknown in 1947, such as that of Kota, have been recognised, and there is more accurate documentation of specific Pahari, Rajasthani and Deccani provenances. Thus the great artistic variety that characterised the subcontinent can now be recorded more fully in an exhibition.

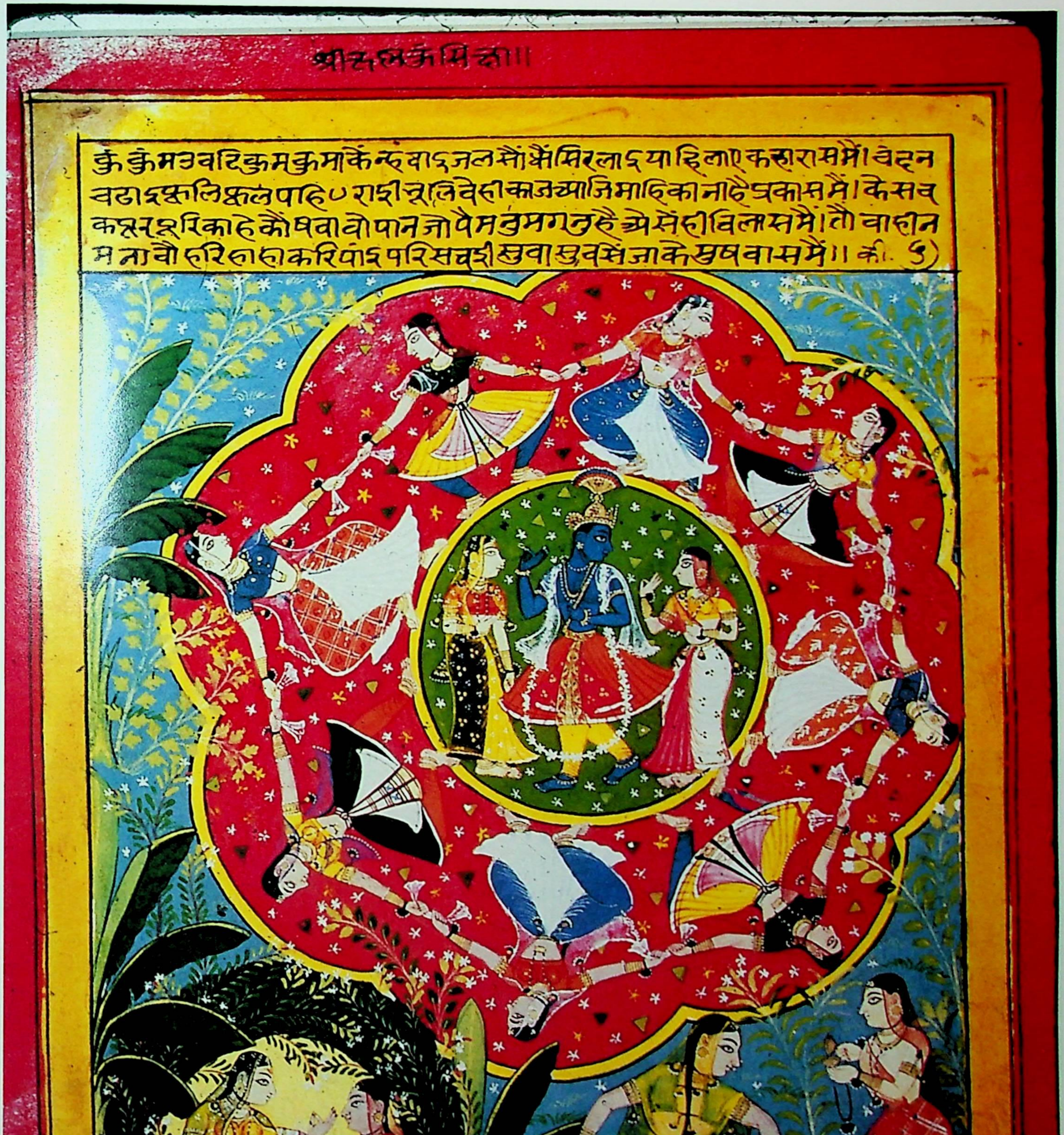
If there is no single stylistic factor that links the numerous symbolic and naturalistic manners of painting, artistic themes are a means of comprehending differences between schools, since most artists illustrated common subjects. The themes of Indian painting were rarely superficial but were, instead, motivating factors that determined stylistic idioms. This is particularly true of the great religious themes which caused the evolution of styles in several states such as Mewar, Kishangarh and Kangra.

The significance of subject-matter in Rajput painting was enhanced by the close association between art and literature throughout the Sultanate and Mughal eras. For example, the creativity of Braj Bhasha poets writing devotional compositions in the Mathura area had a great deal to do with inspiring creativity in sixteenth-and-seventeenth-century Rajasthani painting. The earliest paintings of Krishna subjects, such as those from a *Bhagavata Purana* of *c.* 1525, reflect the fervent general beliefs in Krishna as a folk hero that had developed in the Braj and Rajasthani areas. Artists drew on a collective religious awareness in creating a very powerful symbolic style that was extremely influential; the last great patron of this style was Rana Jagat Singh of Mewar (ruled 1628-52), whose artists excelled in producing paintings with expressionistic colour schemes and sophisticated semi-abstract compositions. One of the masterpieces of the Rana's studio was an illustrated *Rasikapriya* that has rarely been seen. The manuscript is of such quality that four paintings from it were selected for the Hayward exhibition, each representing a different emotional mood. A scene of Krishna bathing with the *gopis* not only

1 Krishna with the *gopis* in a garden

2 Krishna bathing with the *gopis*

3 Krishna dancing with the *gopis*
Folios from a *Rasikapriya* manuscript
c. 1630-40, Mewar, Rajasthan School
Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur





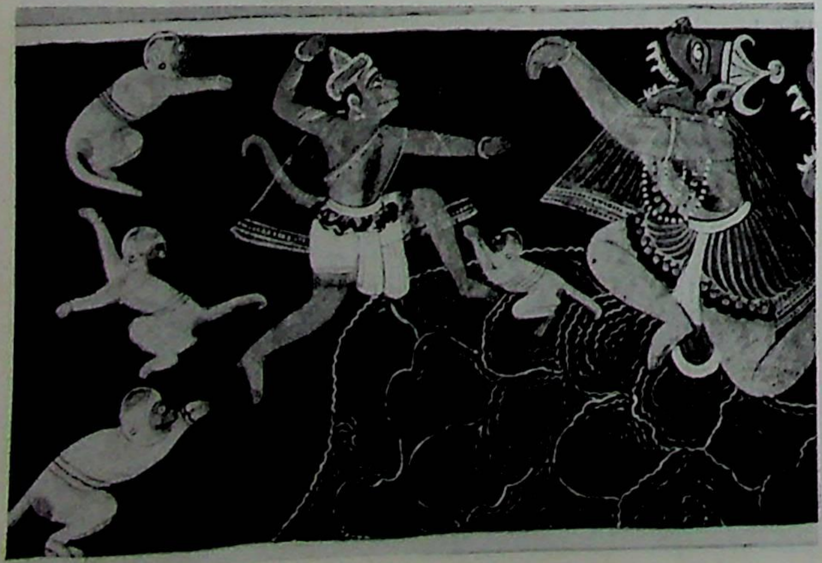
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shows the hero surrounded by admiring girls but pictures him seizing and kissing one *gopi* under water; the artist has experimented quite boldly with the figures under water as well as with the treatment of all the nude female bodies. The *rasamandala* page from this manuscript shows the vibrant arrangement of shapes and patterns characteristic of the early Mewar school, while the two remaining scenes illustrate the complete range of colours employed by Jagat Singh's painters, from a pungent olive green to a lush peach that is combined with blue and red.

After the mid-seventeenth century, the carefree spontaneity of the early devotional style disappeared and in the eighteenth century a completely different aesthetic took its place. Like the previous Krishna devotees, Raja Savant Singh of Kishangarh (ruled 1748-57) was impassioned by the poets of Braj, but their work had new connotations for him. The Raja, who spent the last years of his life wandering in the Braj area, not only identified with Krishna but also modelled the god-hero in his own idealized image. The paintings he commissioned, mainly from his artist Nihal Chand, show Krishna as an exquisitely sensitive Rajput prince well educated in the etiquette of the imperial court. One of the few extant works actually inscribed by Nihal Chand was borrowed for the Hayward exhibition and is completely representative of Savant Singh's taste. The scene, which includes a detailed panorama of palaces and hills in the distance, illustrates one of Savant Singh's own poems describing Krishna and Radha being rowed on the Jamuna at sunset before retiring to spend the night in a glade. The atmosphere, as in most works attributable to Nihal Chand, is a mixture of romantic memory, reverie and devotion characteristic of Savant Singh.

Like this Rajasthani prince, Sansar Chand of Kangra (ruled 1775-1823) was one of several patrons who transformed the Krishna story. At the height of his power, the Kangra Raja had a large studio doing manuscript illustrations of Krishna subjects from Jayadeva's *Gita-Govinda* or Bihari's *Sat Sai.* One of the earliest and most extensive manuscripts prepared was a *Bhagavata Purana,* from which a shadowy night scene in blues and greys and a pastoral scene in soft greens were chosen for the exhibition. This series, now mainly in the National Museum, New Delhi, shows that Sansar Chand's artists set the Krishna story in the Himalayan foothills, turning the god into a Pahari herdboy with graceful rustic companions.

Although there was an attempt to mix painting and sculpture in the Festival exhibition, the miniature paintings seemed to fall naturally into segregated groups. The Krishna story and the *Ramayana,* for example, both involving complex narration, were more easily treated in manuscript illustrations than in sculpture. In addition, miniature painting was developing and sculpture declining precisely at the time when Krishna was first being widely worshipped. The Krishna theme was divided into three parts in the exhibition: Krishna was shown first

4 Krishna subduing the serpent
Folio from a *Bhagavata Purana* manuscript
c. 1775, Kangra, Pahari School
23 x 29 cms.
National Museum, New Delhi

5 Brahma kneeling to Krishna
Folio from a *Bhagavata Purana* manuscript
c. 1775, Kangra, Pahari School
21 x 30 cms.
National Museum, New Delhi

6 Demons in the Forest
Folio 9, *Arsh Ramayana* manuscript
c. 1650, Mewar, Rajasthan School
20 x 33 cms.
Oriental Research Institute, Udaipur

7 Hanuman fighting a demon
Folio from a *Ramayana* manuscript
c. 1635, Malwa, Central Indian School
Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum, Varanasi

8 Bharata meeting Rama and Lakshmana
Folio 24, *Arsh Ramayana* manuscript
c. 1650, Mewar, Rajasthan School
33 x 20 cms.
Oriental Research Institute, Udaipur

as a miraculous child; then as a prankish cowherd; and later as a lover. The third group of paintings appeared under the large section entitled "Life at Court" and treated Krishna as a romantic ideal. A distinction was thus made between the paintings illustrating incidents about Krishna treated devotionally in literature and paintings simply showing Krishna being adored during a period when women were counselled to accept their lovers worshipfully. Unlike the purely devotional scenes, the latter stress the coquetry or eroticism of the Mughal age with Krishna acting in a generalised heroic role as, for example, in a painting done by the early-nineteenth-century artist Chokha for the *thikana* or fiefdom of Devgarh, showing an ardent Radha gazing into the eyes of her lover Krishna in a Rajput palace setting.

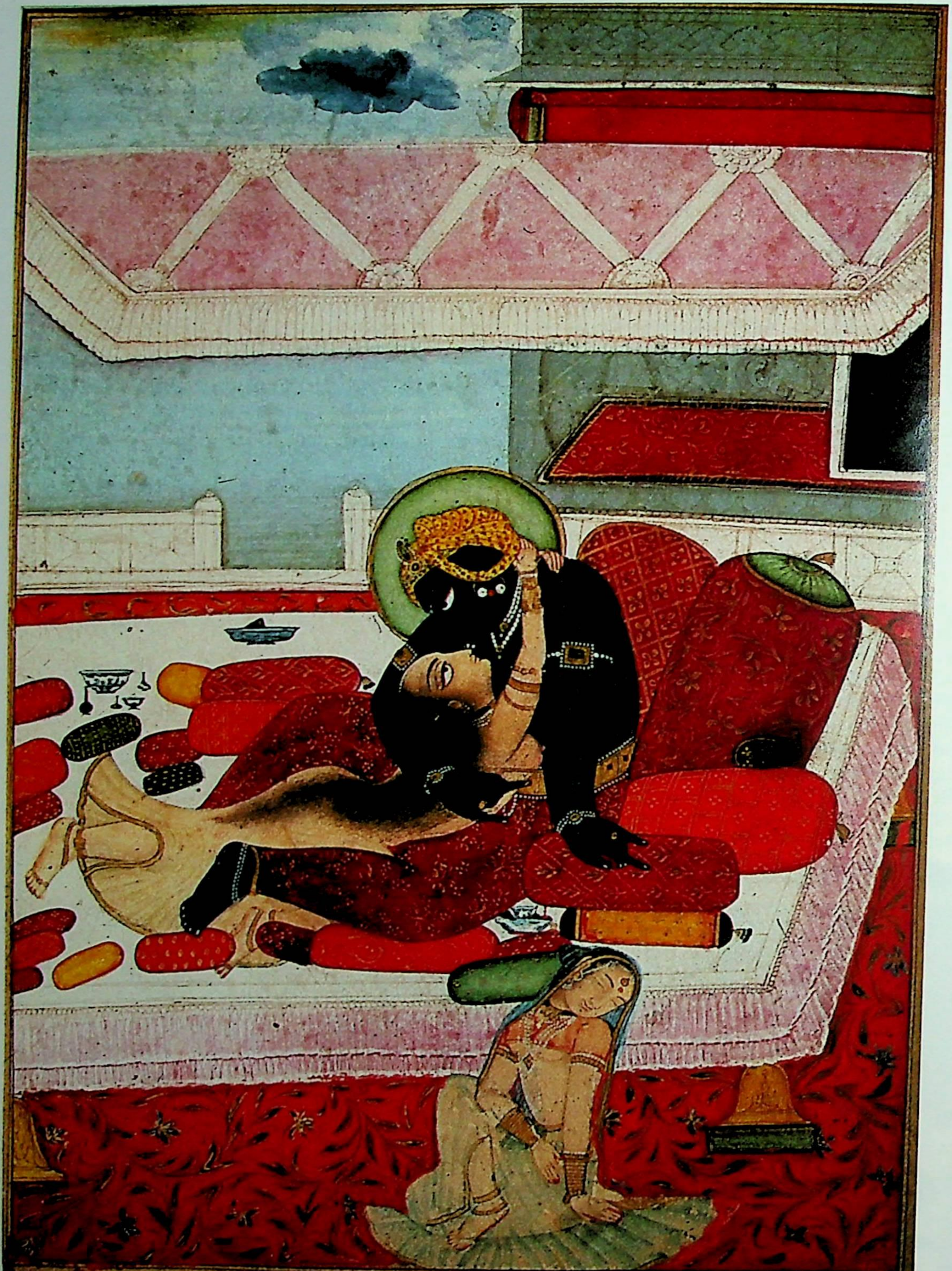
The *Ramayana* with its forest scenes of flowers, birds and animals was represented by folios from several of the greatest extant manuscripts of the Mughal period. A page, from a Malwa series done in about 1635, of extraordinary artistic freedom and vibrancy showed Hanuman attacking demons. In this miniature, stylised wave patterns cover some of the background but the setting and spatial references are otherwise indeterminate; both monkeys and demons float on the page—the monkeys small and charmingly agile with the demons humorously awkward. The *Ramayana* section in the exhibition was one of those that juxtaposed the landscape and vegetation of different areas of India for the viewer's enjoyment. The colourful *Arsh Ramayana*, a manuscript by the artists of Rana Jagat Singh of Mewar, gives a picture of the Rajasthani landscape teeming with birds and flowering trees in bright reds and oranges. A much quieter, more delicate depiction of Rama's forest exile was given by sensitive Popular Mughal artists working about 1600, possibly in eastern India. In the miniature chosen from this latter manuscript, the loving relationship of Rama and Sita is portrayed as the two sit by a stream in an idyllic setting of blossoming plants and tiny trees; ascetics around them meditate in the forest, while Lakshmana climbs a tree in search of fruit. A very large *Ramayana* from Sawar was represented by two folios, one showing the crow reciting the scriptures to Garuda sitting reverently with hands folded in *anjali mudra*, surrounded by many other species of birds, all listening to Rama's story. Finally, the great Shangri *Ramayana*, the extensive set illustrated at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the remote Pahari state of Kulu, was represented by a scene of Jatayu's fight with Ravana. There are several dramatic compositions of this struggle in the National Museum, which owns about two hundred of the Shangri leaves. The one chosen for the Hayward exhibition shows the many-armed demon facing the huge bird who has just slain his horses and forced his chariot from the sky.

The painter's view of nature was also reflected in other sections of the exhibition such as those on hunting, landscape and genre scenes (under "Hunting and Sport", "The Village and the Landscape", "The Market Place"). The section on hunting included a magnificent group of elephant pictures—two from Kota and an unusually large panel from Bikaner. One of the Kota scenes depicts the capture of wild elephants by men using horses and tame elephants; the miniaturist has portrayed the wild elephants cavorting together in their secluded lotus pond before being disturbed and pursued by the hunters. Eighteen elephants have been drawn in an impressive variety of poses, all demonstrating the artist's skilful observation of beasts swimming, cooling themselves, running and even climbing a rocky slope.

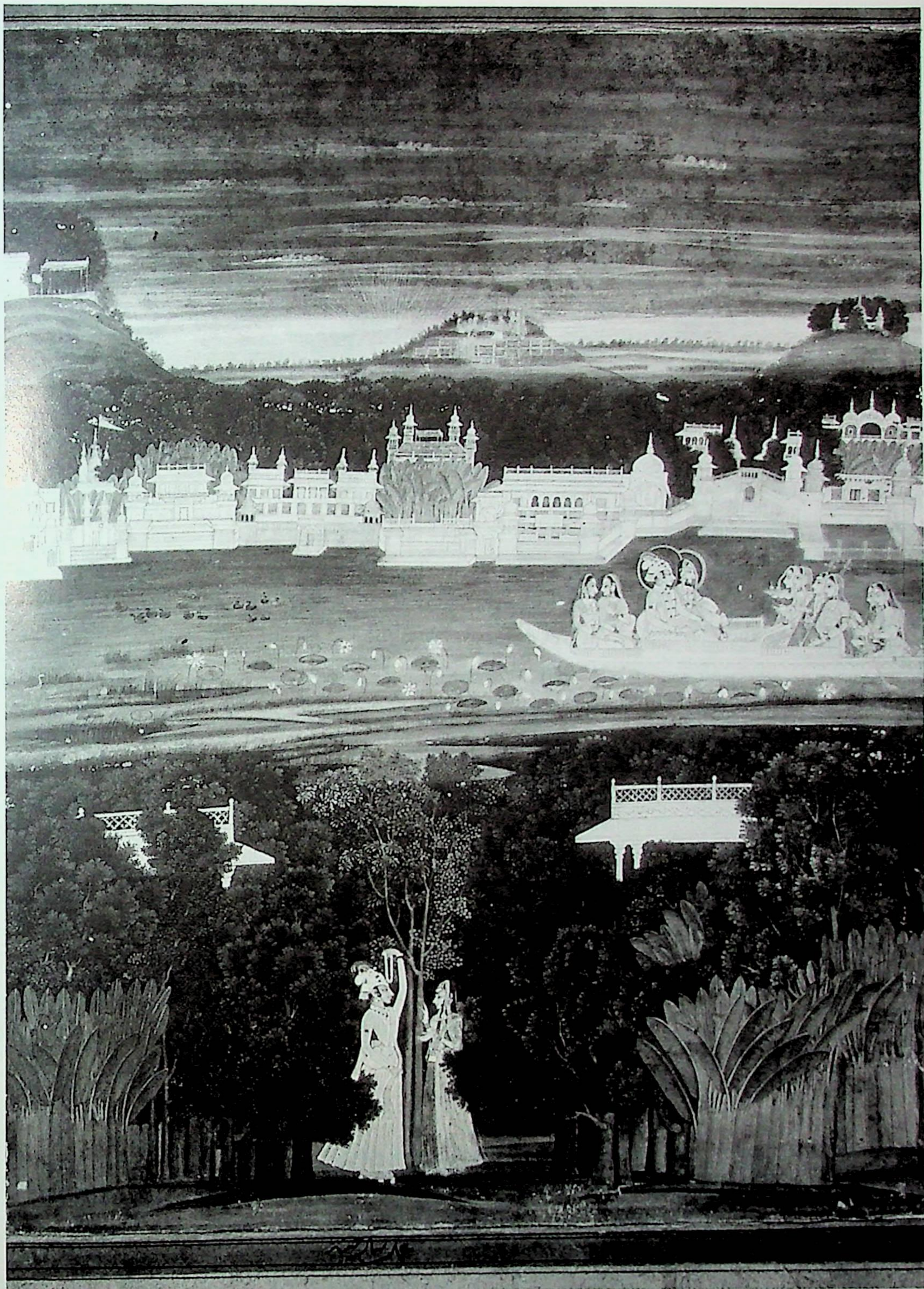
Flowers, birds and more animals were the subjects of the exhibition section entitled "Nature Observed". By the Sultanate and Mughal periods, man was somewhat detached from nature and in fact had become an analytical observer of natural species. This change in attitude was emphasized by the section "Nature Observed" that followed early sculptural pieces. The viewer's primal experience thus paralleled ancient man's concentration on sculpted natural symbols but was completed by the painter's later Mughal-and-European-influenced observations. The important role played by the Emperor Jahangir (ruled 1605-27),



8



9 **Krishna and Radha lost in admiration; Attributed artist: Chokha; *c.* 1810, Devgarh, Rajasthan School; 22 x 16 cms.; Private collection**



10 Radha and Krishna; Artist: Nihal Chand; *c.* 1750, Kishangarh, Rajasthan School; National Museum, New Delhi

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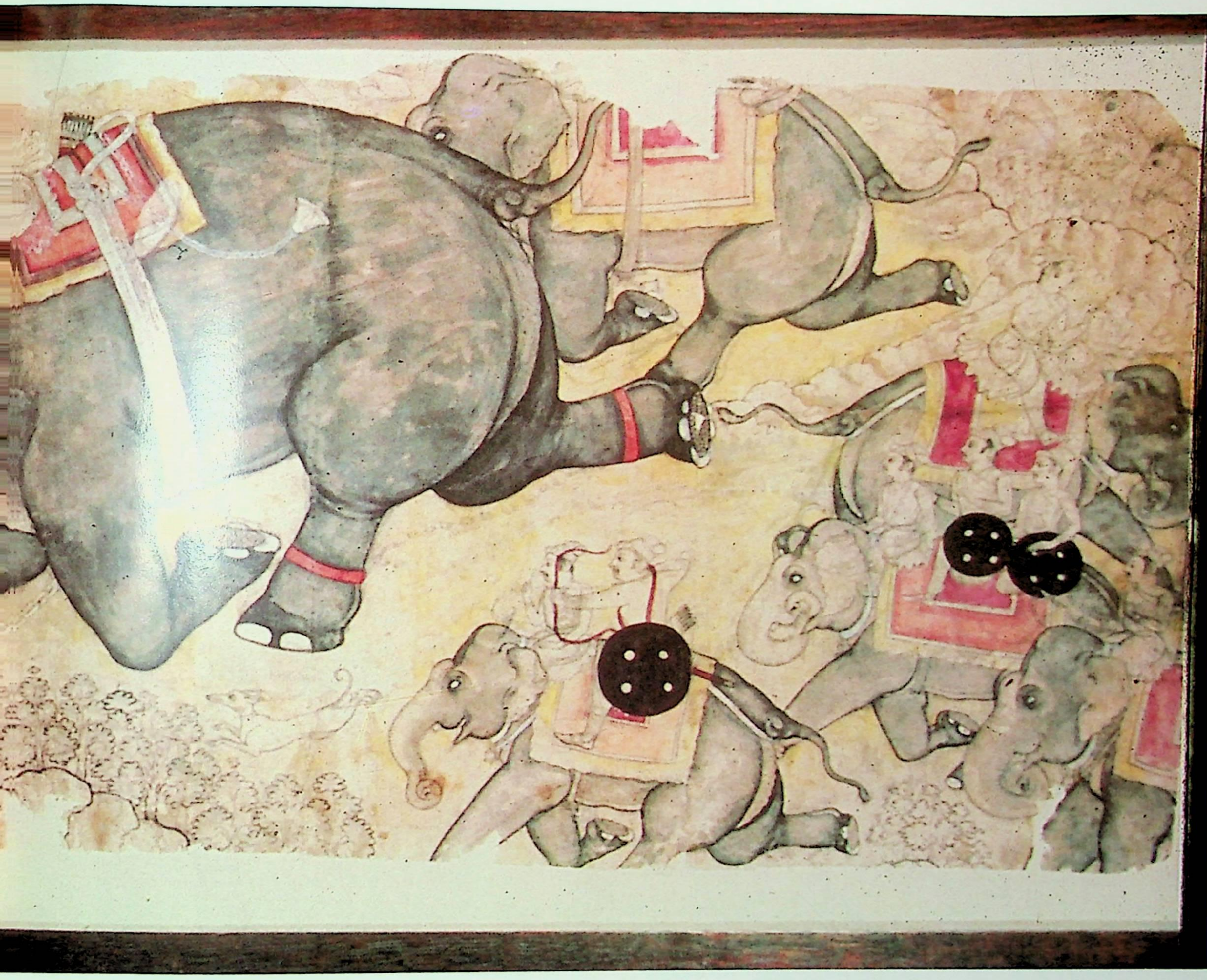
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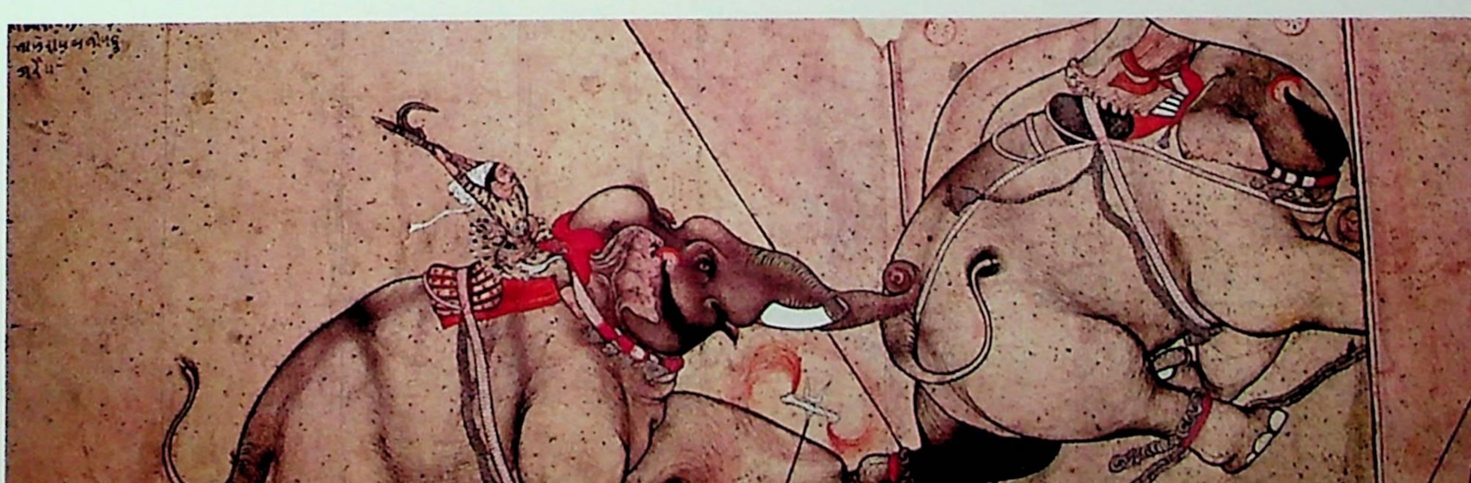


11 A royal hunting party
c. 1670, Bikaner, Rajasthan School
38 x 106 cms.
Private collection

12 Capturing wild elephants (detail)
c. 1745, Kotah, Rajasthan School
45 x 51 cms.
The Chester Beatty Library, and
Gallery of Oriental Art, Dublin

13 Two elephants running out of a tent
c. 1720, Kotah
24 x 49 cms.
Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay





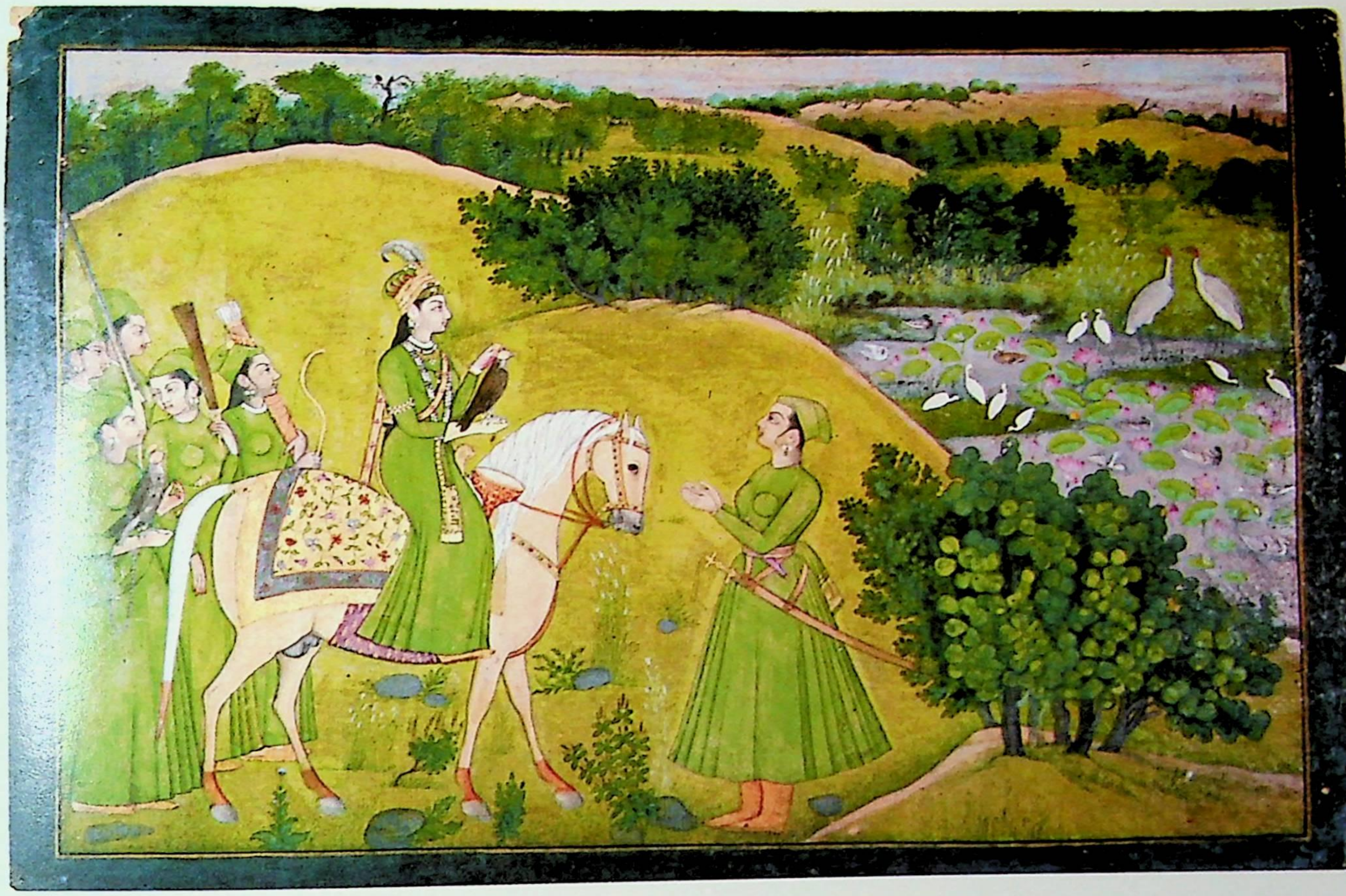


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14 Rama and Sita in the forest
Folio from a *Ramayana* manuscript
c. 1600, Sub-imperial Mughal School
National Museum, New Delhi

15 A princess hawking
Here attributed to the artist Manak
c. A.D. 1750, Pahari School
Guler, Mughal influence
National Museum, New Delhi

16 Ravana fighting Jatayu
Folio from the *Shangri Ramayana* manuscript
c. 1710, Kulu, Pahari School
18 x 28 cms.
National Museum, New Delhi



15



16

an amateur naturalist who requested artists to do exacting studies of animals, was stressed by major Jahangiri works. These included the spectacular picture of a horned goat shot by Afghans and presented to Jahangir on a trip in 1607, a portrait of a Himalayan species of pheasant by the emperor's greatest nature painter, Mansur, and a delicate *nilgai* attributable to the same artist.

The Indian painter fulfilled the demands of his Rajput and Mughal patrons not only by painting scenes of nature or mythology but also by illustrating courtly life and religious devotion. These two groups of pictures were the largest in the exhibition and included classic choices such as the portrait of two Gujarati nobles by Jahangir's artist Bishandas as well as previously unpublished examples like a spectacular scene of Bahadur Shah (ruled 1707-12) on a golden canopied throne before a palace gate surrounded by officials. The section on courtly life contrasted the activity of the Mughal or Rajput rulers with the quieter lives of palace women who were shown conversing, bathing, preparing for lovers and giving birth. In the section on devotion, rulers were shown utilizing water vessels, flower stands, oil lamps and rosaries in order to give a clear idea of Indian religious practices.

The remarkable variety of Indian painting, emphasized in each of the thematic sections throughout the exhibition, was suggested by miniatures showing rulers, courtesans, musicians and ascetics sketched or painted in numerous ways. One of the largest comparative groups was that of the *yogis*, who were idealized and caricatured as well as naturalistically pictured. A serious ascetic done in a simple, straightforward but very moving way by the Pahari artist Nainsukh contrasted with the fantastical picture of two gnarled *yogis* by the Mughal artist Basawan. The choice of works in this section, showing disciplined yogic practice as viewed by artists from all over India, perhaps epitomizes the goal of the thematic painting arrangement for the Hayward exhibition. The treatment of a common theme that engrossed and fascinated painters living in different areas during different centuries seems a very cogent way of demonstrating the genius of Indian art.

Linda Leach



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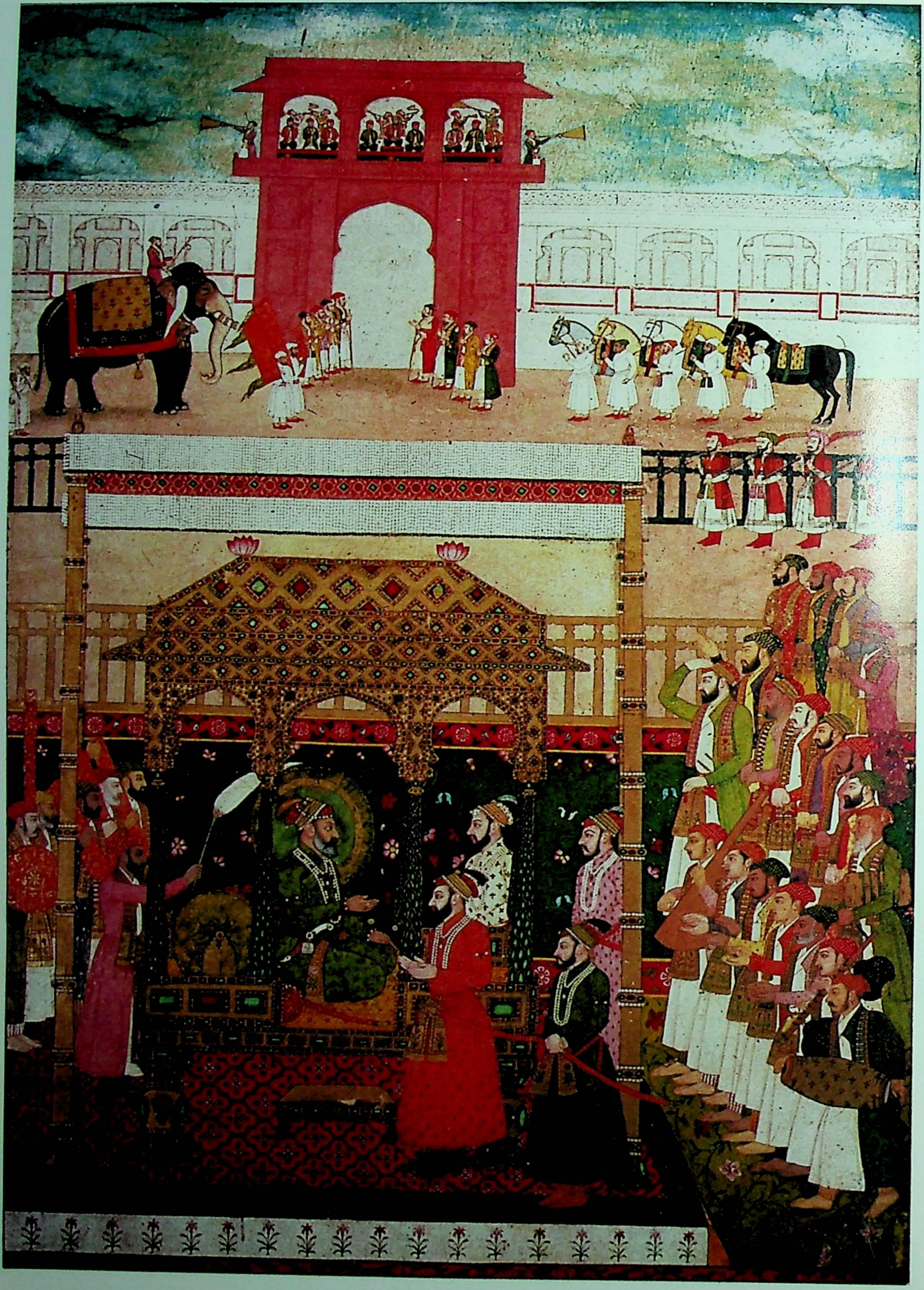
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17 A Raja worshipping Krishna
c. 1700, Bilaspur, Pahari School
23 x 17 cms.
Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad

18 Two ascetics offered a flower by a shepherd
Attributed artist: Basawan
c. 1590, Mughal School
23 x 18 cms.
India Office Library and Records, London

19 Raja Dhiraj Singh worshipping
c. 1700, Ragogarh, Central Indian School
30 x 24 cms.
Private collection





20

20 **Bahadur Shah on a gold throne**; *c.* 1710, Mughal School; 29 x 30 cms.; Private collection

21 ***Nilgai*** (detail); Attributed artist: Mansur; *c.* 1610-15, Mughal School; 29 x 23 cms.; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge





The Indian Heritage

Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule

The Mughal dynasty lasted for over three hundred years as a ruling power in India. Although towards the end its power was merely nominal, at its peak, life at the Mughal Emperors' court achieved a splendour and luxury unsurpassed by their European, Ottoman or Safavid contemporaries. The aim of "The Indian Heritage" exhibition was to evoke, within 553 square metres of exhibition space, three centuries of artistic patronage, collecting, learning and empire-building, and to gather together the artefacts and trappings of everyday life at the Mughal court in a way that would place the decorative arts of the period in a social context.

The daunting task of evoking life in the Mughal Empire was complicated by the fact that, although the Mughals held nominal sovereignty over much of India, many areas remained virtually independent under local rulers such as the Muslim Sultans of the Deccan and the Hindu Princes of Rajasthan. The artistic and cultural influence of the Mughal court on these states was strong, but they maintained their own identities, and had their own court painters and craftsmen. Among the provincial rulers were many of remarkable distinction and strength of personality, and several of them were represented in the exhibition by their portraits and personal possessions. One of the most famous was Tipu Sultan (r. 1784-99) whose chintz tent, taken at the battle of Seringapatam in which he died, formed a focal point of the display.

The exhibition, designed by Brian Griggs of the Victoria and Albert Museum, was conceived as a series of separate but linked areas, each representing a different aspect of the ruler's daily life and of the court's activities. The opening section evoked the architectural setting of the Mughal court, in particular that of Akbar's imperial city of Fatehpur Sikri. Two huge painted views of Salim Chishti's tomb and the Diwan-i-Khas were discovered in storage at the Victoria and Albert Museum— their provenance and original use are unknown (perhaps the backdrops for a late-nineteenth or early-twentieth-century exhibition) but, glimpsed through sandstone *jali* windows, their realism and large scale helped to create the impression of looking out from a cool *zenana* onto brightly sunlit buildings. Other architectural pieces were also included in this section, several showing the decoration with inlaid semi-precious stones (*pietra dura*) which became such a dominant feature of Mughal architecture, especially during the reign of Shah Jahan, when it reached its zenith in the Taj Mahal, completed in 1648.

The motifs used in architectural ornamentation were shared to a considerable extent by the decorative arts. This is particularly apparent in the case of the flowering-plant motif which first came to prominence in Jahangir's reign, its sudden and all-pervading popularity often being ascribed to the Emperor's revelatory trip to Kashmir in the spring of 1620, when his court painter Mansur made scores of flower paintings. Four flower studies were displayed in this section: they date from about 1635 and are taken from the album assembled by Shah Jahan's son Dara Shikuh as a present for his wife Nadira Banu Begam. Flower paintings of this sort were heavily influenced by contemporary European herbals, and their combination of naturalistic detail and artistic stylisation became a peculiarly Mughal feature which is found in almost every branch of the decorative arts. It was illustrated in this part of the exhibition by the floral borders of miniature paintings, a silver cup and cover decorated with rows of flowers and a carpet showing the formal flowers arranged in a trellis design.

The development of Mughal architecture was represented by paintings of the major monuments done by Indian artists for British patrons in the early nineteenth century. This section included the only view of the Taj Mahal in the exhibition— a surprise, perhaps, to those visitors for whom Mughal art and the Taj are practically synonymous.

The other preconception that most people hold about the Mughals is that they were extremely rich, and that, at least, was substantiated in the exhibition. Incorporated in this section of the exhibition were two darkened cases in which spotlights picked out some of the finest objects from the treasuries of the Mughal emperors. One case illustrated their fondness for collecting and their love of beautiful objects for their own sake, and the other represented the actual wealth of the royal household in terms of gold, jade and precious gems. A large part of the

1 Cameo
c. 1630-40, probably the work of a European at the Mughal court
Sardonyx with enamelled gold setting
6.7 x 7.2 cms.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

2 Shah Jahan as a prince, holding a jewel
From the Minto album
c. 1616-17, Mughal
Gouache; 20.6 x 11.5 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



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imperial collections came from overseas, brought by ambassadors anxious to ingratiate themselves with the "Grand Mogul" by means of diplomatic gifts. The connoisseur-emperors could spot a below-standard artefact instantly: Jahangir's memoirs are dotted with remarks about the poor workmanship of European offerings. The glittering court and the patronage it offered lured the craftsmen themselves from Europe to India, and several of the objects shown here are the works of Europeans at the Mughal court.

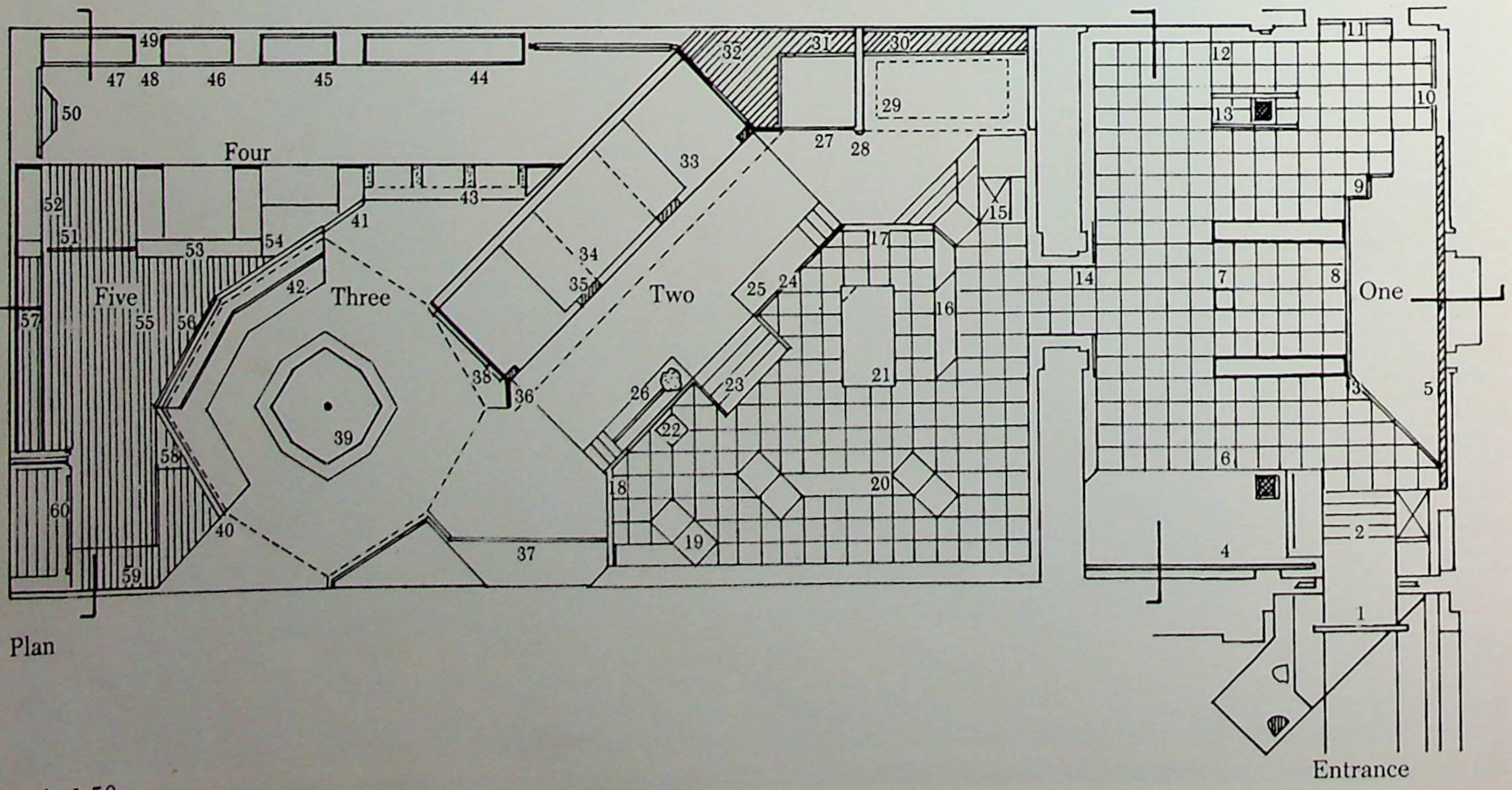
Jahangir's renowned collection of wine-cups, some reputedly carved from single precious stones, was represented by a jade cup, another foreign object (in this instance Iranian) taken into the Mughal collection, where it had an inscription added in praise of Jahangir. The second case included a set of the gold coins that Jahangir had minted with signs of the zodiac in place of the calendar month,' and also one of the portrait coins made for presentation by the Emperor to his most favoured courtiers to wear on their turbans or around their necks. Representing the precious stones in the Imperial treasury was a plaque made of a carved emerald of 182 carats and the famous Carew Spinel: a huge red uncut stone engraved with the names of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Also shown were several seventeenth-century gold jewelled objects from the Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, which were sent as a gift to the Empress of Russia by Nadir Shah of Iran after he had sacked Delhi in 1739.

Through a cusped arch modelled on those of the Moti Masjid in Delhi, the exhibition opened out into an area which included displays on the themes of royal symbolism, science and learning, and Islam. The visitor was confronted by a huge gold lion head from the throne of Tipu Sultan of Mysore, and a gold tiger head finial from the same throne. Poignantly displayed beside these gleaming metaphors of strength and power was the slightly bent and faded crown of the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah II (r. 1837-58). As a reminder of the dynasty's beginnings, a simple drinking-cup from the time of Babur (possibly his own) was shown beside a more grandiose vessel which belonged to Jahangir.

Several paintings illustrated the emperors reading, writing or discoursing with scholars. The pursuit of learning and science played an important part in Mughal court life, but it was difficult to reflect this adequately in an exhibition devoted to the decorative arts. The sciences of astronomy and medicine were represented by a spherical brass star-map and a talismanic bowl used in treating the sick. Examples of the tools of the calligrapher's art were shown in company with pages of calligraphy and a beautifully written and bound Sufi treatise. A small and essentially symbolic display was devoted to the all-pervading religion of Islam, with objects and paintings relating to the seven pillars of the faith. For example, a painting of a congregation in a mosque represents prayer and a copper begging-bowl the giving of alms. Several prayer-rugs were shown here, and this section also provided wall-space for large floorspreads and carpets. At this point the visitor reached a vantage point from which several parts of the exhibition could be seen. This and the preceding areas were constructed on a raised false floor, and from this level one looked down on to the central part of the exhibition which represented the heart of the court – the royal throne (this one belonged to Ranjit Singh, the

3 Exhibition Plan. April 1982. Victoria and Albert Museum
Key to Plan
One The first room with the floor shown as squares and *jalis* (6 & 8) looking through to the large views of Fatehpur Sikri (4 & 5). This room deals with architecture, its ornament and relation to the development of ornament in the decorative arts. The central square contained objects that might be found in a Mughal or Rajput Treasury.
Two The first part of the large room continued the sandstone coloured raised floor level of the first room and showed objects with regal associations, large textiles and aspects of court life in the palace/fort complex. A flight of steps led down to a white (for marble) courtyard faced by the arches (see elevation) of the 'durbar area' copied from the colonnade of the Agra royal bath facade. Three sections leading off on the right showed Hinduism with a Krishna shrine, Music (29-30) as a '*Jhalsaghar*' and the life of women in a '*Zanana*' area (27, 31). Walking in the opposite direction the visitor reaches
Three Life in the Mughal/Rajput camp, largely displayed in Tipu Sultan's tent – shown by the dotted line. The Ajmer colonnade (43) opens into
Four The 'Bazaar' where the crafts are shown in separate '*dukkans*' (44-54)
Five The last area marked with floor boards on plan showed the degeneration of Indian taste under European influence.

4 View of the exhibition: The Golden Throne of Ranjit Singh



Plan

3 Scale 1.50

"Lion of the Punjab"), displayed as if in a durbar setting, surrounded by emblems of kingship and backed by hangings from the walls of the magnificent tents used by the emperor and court while travelling between the imperial cities or on campaign. Mughal paintings of the emperor in durbar were shown. The durbar area was set in an arcade based on the marble colonnade from Agra Fort in the Victoria and Albert Museum's collections: erection of the real colonnade unfortunately proved to be too costly; so here it was evoked in wood instead.

To one side of the durbar setting, the cloistered life of the *zenana* was represented. These were the women's and children's quarters, and their costume and garments were shown, as well as cosmetic pots, games and paintings of ladies passing the time, one kite-flying, another playing with a yo-yo. The theme of leisure was continued into the music-room setting, where stringed instruments and drums were displayed with paintings with musical themes. This "room" had a painted ceiling from Gujarat which depicted the *Rasamandala,* the circular dance of Krishna and the *gopis.* The Hindu religion of many of the Mughals' vassal states was represented nearby by a shrine surrounded by paintings of Hindu worship and objects used in ritual.

On the other side of the "*durbar*", the exhibition turned to regal activities outside the walls of the court and examined hunting and military campaigning. Here one was confronted by the flowery splendour of Tipu's chintz tent, of which the roof and one long wall of niched compartments were displayed. At first sight it seems an incongruously delicate object to use on a battlefield, but its plain cotton exterior indicates its functional nature. In the exhibition the tent provided the setting for several of Tipu's personal possessions. A long display case held weapons, shields and armour as well as paintings documenting important battles and campaigns, notably the Battle of Samugarh, in which Shah Jahan's sons fought for succession, and Dara Shikuh, the heir apparent, was vanquished.

A small display on the sport of hunting included a riding coat, from the Victoria and Albert Museum collection, beautifully embroidered with animals and plants, as well as a hawking drum, a falconer's glove, a hawk's hood and paintings of the hunt. A wall-case of fine girdles (*patkas*) and a display of items relating to administration and trade throughout the Mughal empire led the visitor on to the major architectural item in the exhibition: a stone colonnade from a royal pavilion at Ajmer, dating from the early seventeenth century. Through its arches, the theme turned to craftsmanship and the development of the decorative arts. Based on the idea of a bazaar with its individual booths, two rows of alcoves displayed printed textiles, glass, *bidri* and base-metal ware and small decorative daggers. Further cases represented the arts of the jade carver, silversmith, goldsmith and jeweller. The objects in this section provided a survey of the development of each craft, and showed major "landmarks" in their decorative evolution.

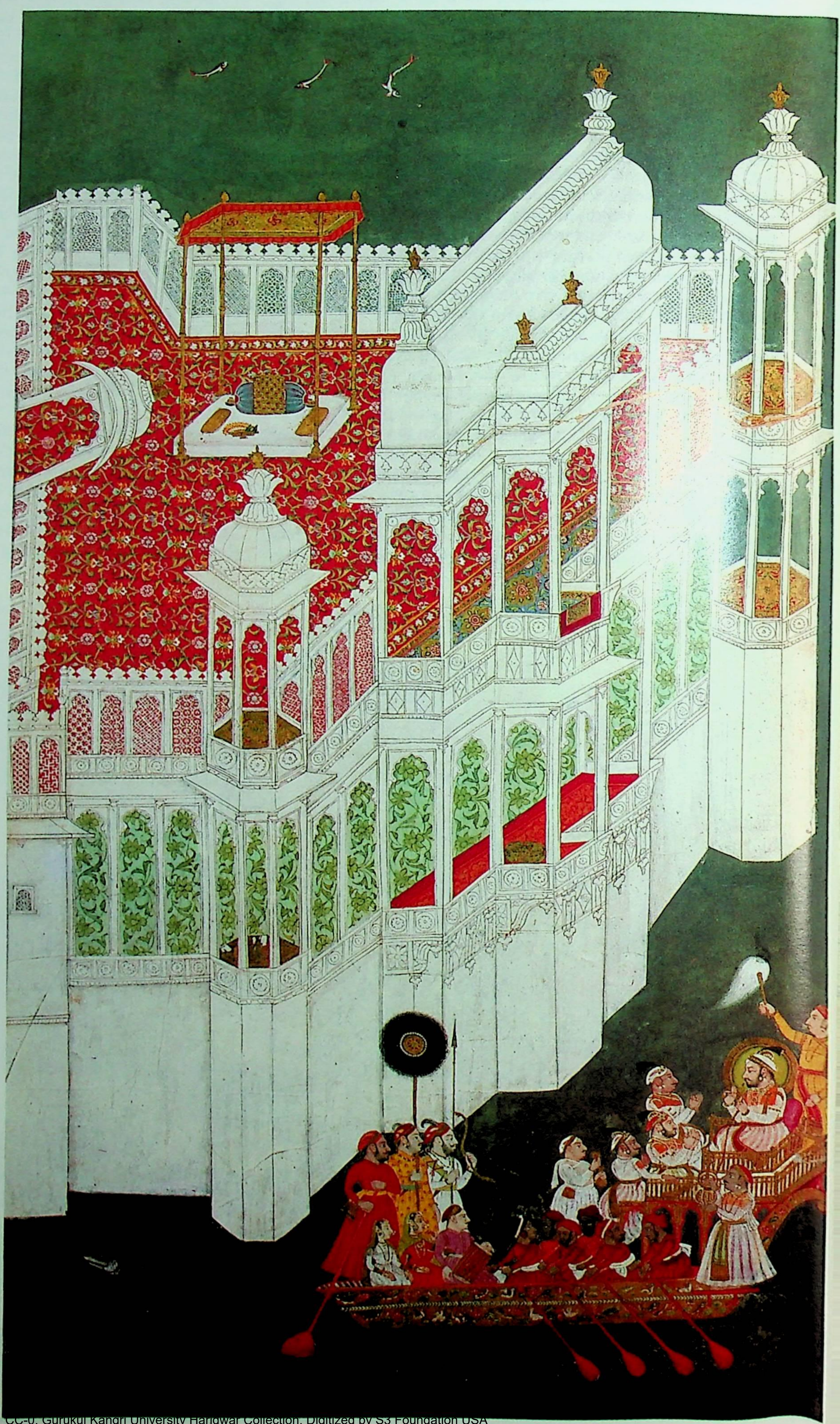
Drawing to its close, the exhibition turned to the decadent years of the Mughal empire. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Indian rulers began to emulate European taste, often with extravagant but aesthetically mixed results. From the time of the first European ambassadors to Jahangir's court, Western taste had been assimilated into Mughal art, but the passion for things European reached its height at the court of



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5 Maharana Jagat Singh of Udaipur boating on the Pichola Lake
c. 1740-45, Udaipur
Gouache; 52 x 30 cms.
Private collection

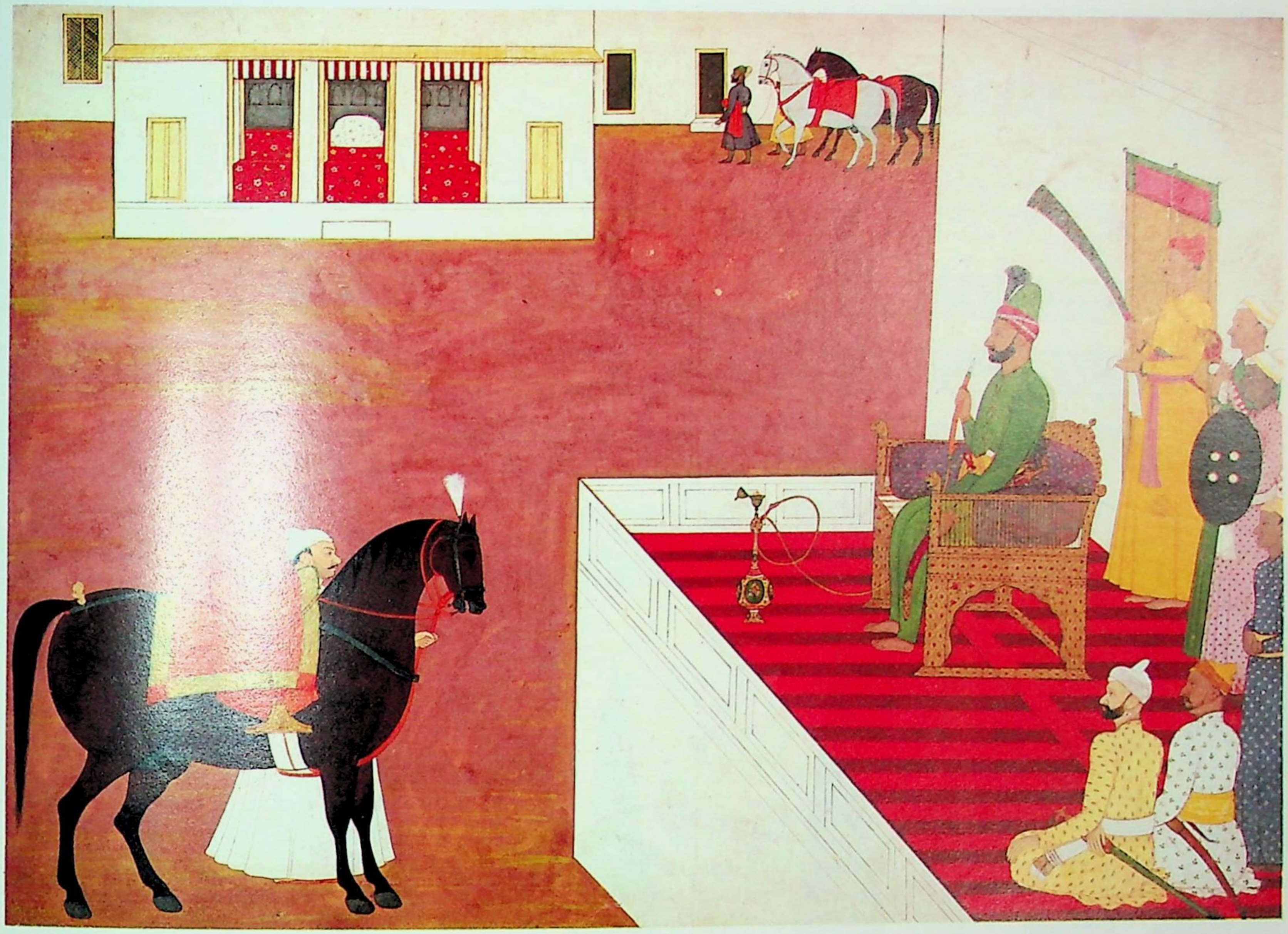
The Maharanas of Udaipur commissioned a large number of paintings of life at their court: among several in the exhibition are five showing Jagat Singh at leisure, worship and his official duties. Here he is seen on a royal barge, in the company of his minister, his son Pratap Singh and two sardars, as well as several servants who carry the trappings of a royal outing. These include a jewelled *huqqa* which the Maharana is smoking, a *chowry* and a royal sunshade. Attendant ladies, probably singers or nautch girls, sit at the far end of the ornately decorated barge. The luxury of the lake palace is represented by lavish floor-coverings and a formal seat which seems to await the return of its occupant.



6 Raja Balwant Singh of Jammu inspecting a horse
c. 1750, Jammu
Gouache; 24.6 x 34.2 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Balwant Singh (1724-63) was a prince of the state of Jammu in the Punjab Hills. His court painter, Nainsukh, provided a unique record of his everyday activities in a style that is much more intimate and personal than the formal court scenes of the Mughals or the portraits of the more intimidating Rajput rulers. Here Balwant Singh is seen in an unadorned setting, though he sits on a splendid throne chair, smoking a *huqqa* and considering the points of a horse that has been brought before him for inspection.

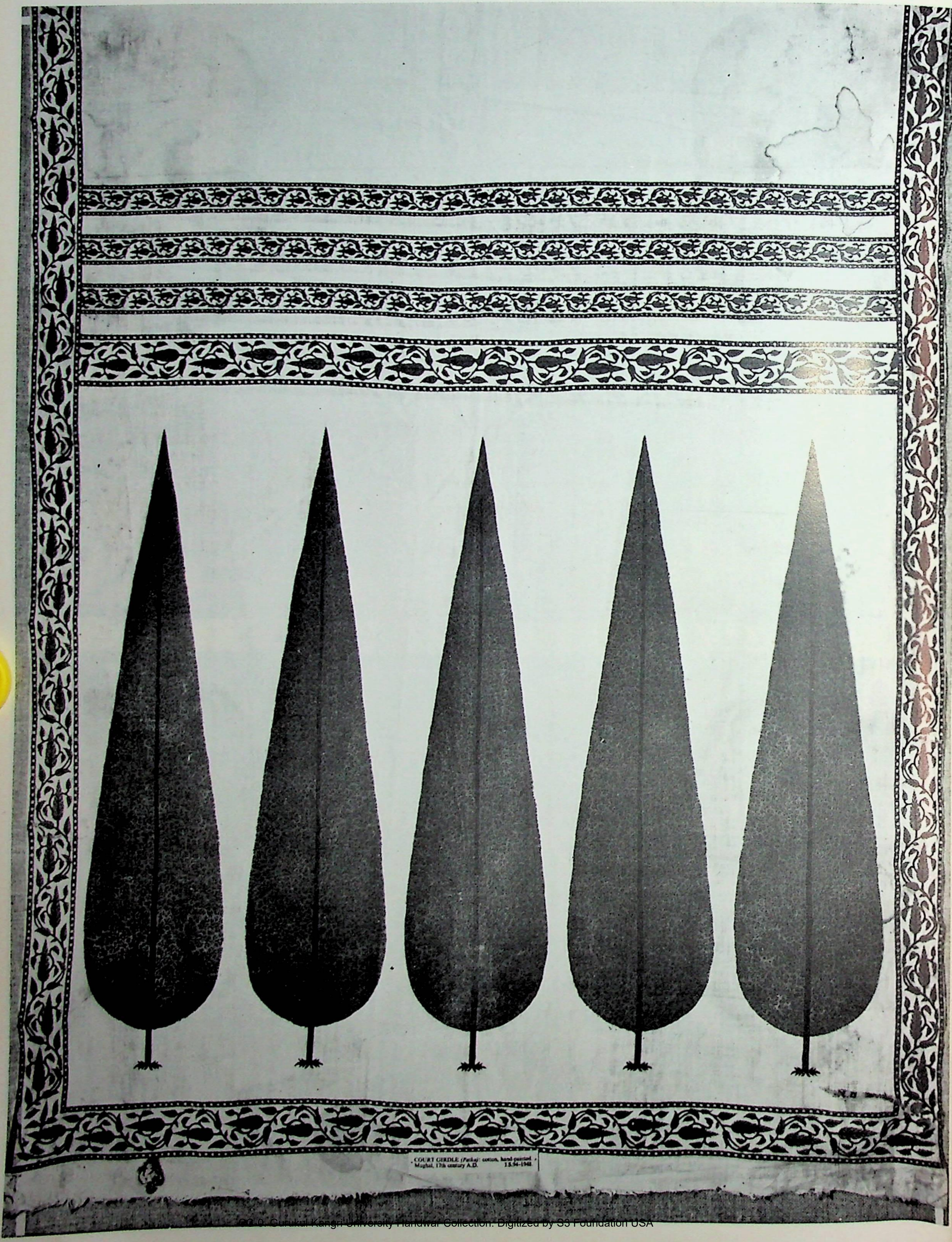
7 View of the exhibition: Tipu Sultan's tent



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COURT GIRDLE (Patka): cotton, hand-painted
Mughal, 17th century A.D. 15.94-1948

8 ***Patka*** (court girdle)
Late 17th or early 18th century, Mughal, probably Burhanpur
Cotton, stencilled, painted and dyed; 533 x 71 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

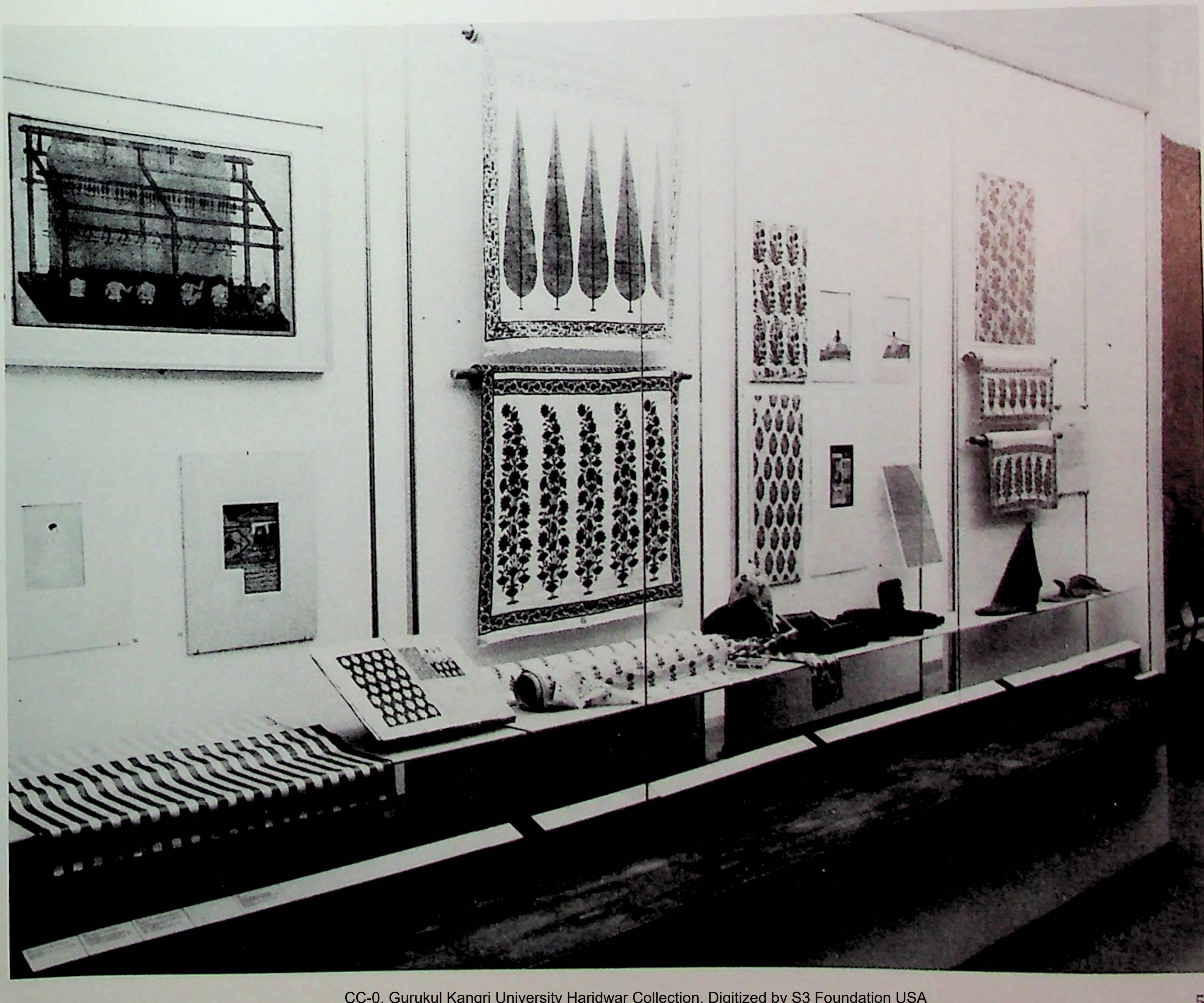
Not all Mughal textiles were covered with flowering plants – the simplicity of this design shows that individual imagination was not swamped by the fashion of the time. The colour scheme is restricted to a muted dark green overlaid with a delicate fern-like pattern in red, set against a white background. Cypress trees have always had an important place in Islamic textile design, usually providing the upright element in a repeating pattern or the sides of a prayer niche, but it is unusual to see them isolated like this, without the customary accompanying flowers or tree saplings. Burhanpur was a renowned centre for finely printed cottons at this period.

9 View of the exhibition: textile panels

the Nawab of Oudh at Lucknow in the early nineteenth century, and from there it spread to other centres, including Delhi. Several grandiose and bizarre items of furniture were displayed in the exhibition, as well as curiosities such as a pale blue Wedgwood-style *huqqa*-base, Tipu's yellow Sévres cup and saucer, and a silver cage containing a clockwork singing bird made for the Raja of Nabha in the nineteenth century.

There could hardly be a greater contrast between Babur's simple horn cup and the ostentatiously elaborate furniture so beloved by the nineteenth century Maharajas. When Babur first arrived in India, he tetchily noted that "Hindustan is a country of few charms . . . of genius and capacity there is none. . . in handicraft and work there is no form or symmetry, method or quality". How he would have reacted to the Kedleston Sofa is open to conjecture, but it is surely safe to assume that, wandering among the six hundred objects assembled here, he would have found cause to reconsider his opinion.

Rosemary Crill



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10 Carpet
Mid-17th century, Mughal
Wool pile, silk warps and wefts; 142.2 x 88.9 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This rug (which is in fact a large fragment) shows a combination of Europeanised formal flowering plants with a trellis design influenced by the Turkish velvets and brocades which were popular at the Mughal court under Shah Jahan. Its colouring and the use of multi-coloured silk warps are, however, typically Mughal.

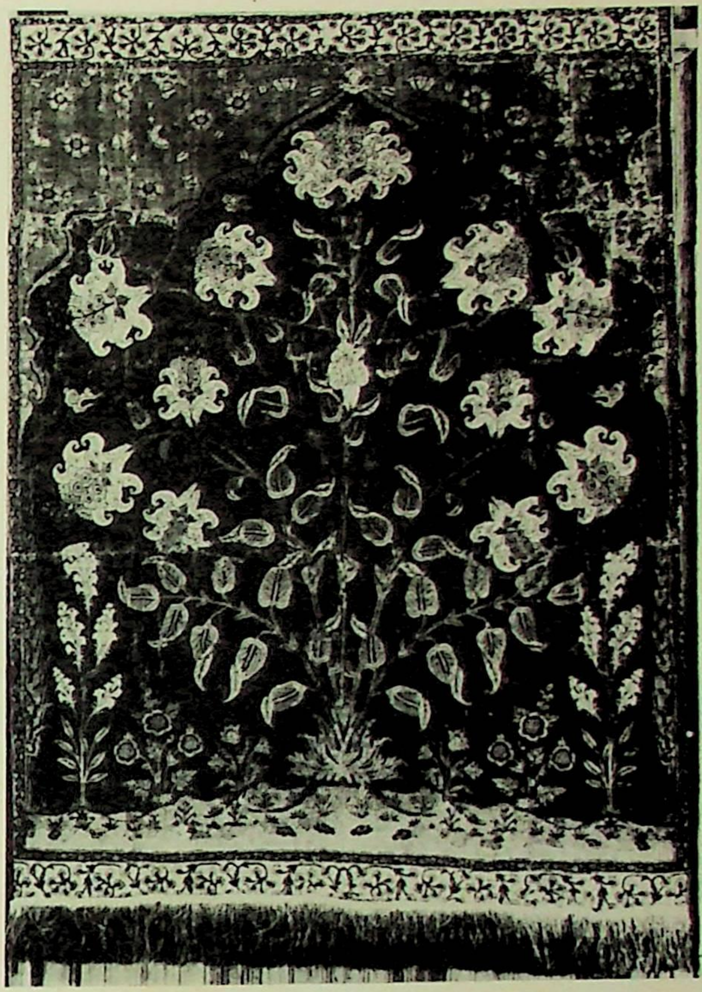
11 Prayer Rug
17th century (2nd quarter), Mughal
Woollen pile on silk warps and wefts; 124.5 x 90 cms.
Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, Lugano

The consummate skill of the carpet-weavers of Shah Jahan's reign is embodied in the small group of prayer rugs which show a flowering plant within a niche. Their high knot count (this one has about 1058 knots per square inch, one other example and a fragment surpass 2,000) is made possible by the use of a silk foundation and the smooth and lustrous wool of the Kashmir goat, which is also used in making Kashmir shawls. The drawing of the plant is very detailed and naturalistic, and the design incorporates Chinese elements (introduced via Persia), including the rocks and water at the base of the plant and the small clouds used as space-fillers.

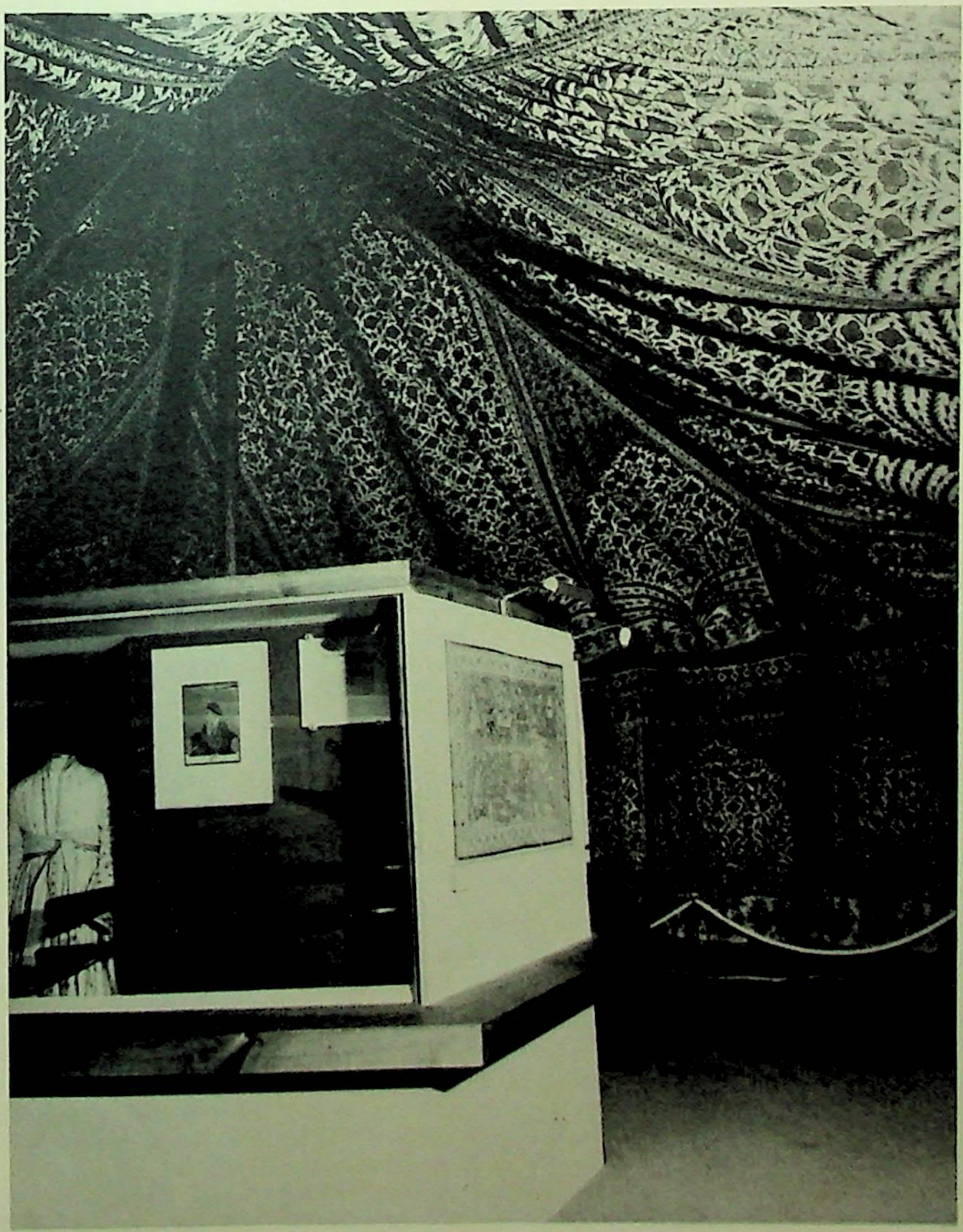
12 View of the exhibition: Tipu Sultan's tent

13 Part of a tent-hanging
c. 1600, western India, probably Ahmedabad
Silk; 172.5 x 93.8 cms.
Gift of George P. Bickford
Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland

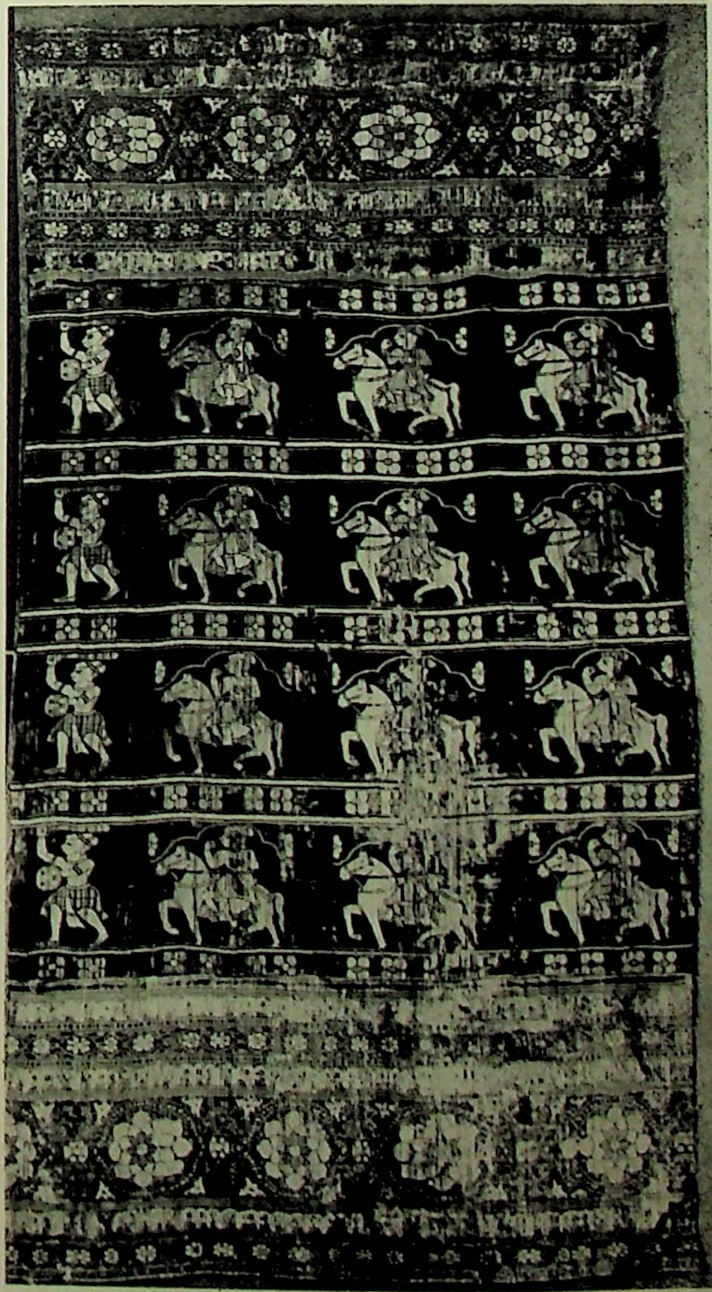
This is the earliest textile in the exhibition. Though it depicts a Hindu scene of Rajput warriors, its extremely high quality suggests that it was made in a royal workshop, probably that of Ahmedabad, where weaving attained its highest quality in western India at this time. The horizontal arrangement of the design is typical of Hindu textiles. Against a red background, rows of mounted Rajputs in yellow and white are led by warriors on foot brandishing swords. The top and bottom borders of lotus medallions were stitched on separately to the main design, but they are undoubtedly contemporary.



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14 ***Pandan*** (box)
Late 16th or early 17th century, Mughal
Enamelled copper; 7.2 x 13.8 cms.
Collection: Simon Digby

15 Cameo
c. 1630-40, probably the work of a European at the Mughal court
Sardonyx with enamelled gold setting; 6.7 x 7.2 cms.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

16 Wine cup
Period of Shah Jahan (1628-58), Mughal
Nephrite jade; 13.3 x 8.2 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This beautifully carved drinking vessel recalls organic forms in its shape and decoration. It is shaped like a halved gourd, tapering to a delicately curling stem at one end to form the handle. Its underside is carved in low relief with narcissus flowers, and the foot is in the form of a sculpted lotus flower. Its lobed and tapering shape and the use of the flower pedestal resemble those of the more famous "Shah Jahan cup": this one is a much smaller but equally appealing example of the skill attained by jade carvers at Shah Jahan's court.



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17 Binding of a manuscript of the ***Kimya-i Sa'adat*** by al-Ghazali
1630-40, Mughal
Reddish-brown leather painted in gold; 14.8 x 9.7 cms.
Private collection

The binding of this manuscript of a famous work by the Sufi al-Ghazali of Tus (1058-1111) is a fine example of the use of the flowering-plant motif, which came to prominence in Jahangir's reign and found its fullest expression under Shah Jahan. The format of book-binding recalls the pages of the European herbals which so strongly influenced the development of the flower motif in India. The Chinese clouds which fill the spaces of the upper half are typical of the Mughal eclecticism of the period, and can also be seen in the prayer rug.

18 ***Sarpech*** (turban ornament)
Early 18th century, Mughal
Gold, set with precious stones, the stem enamelled in translucent green; 16.8 x 5.8 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

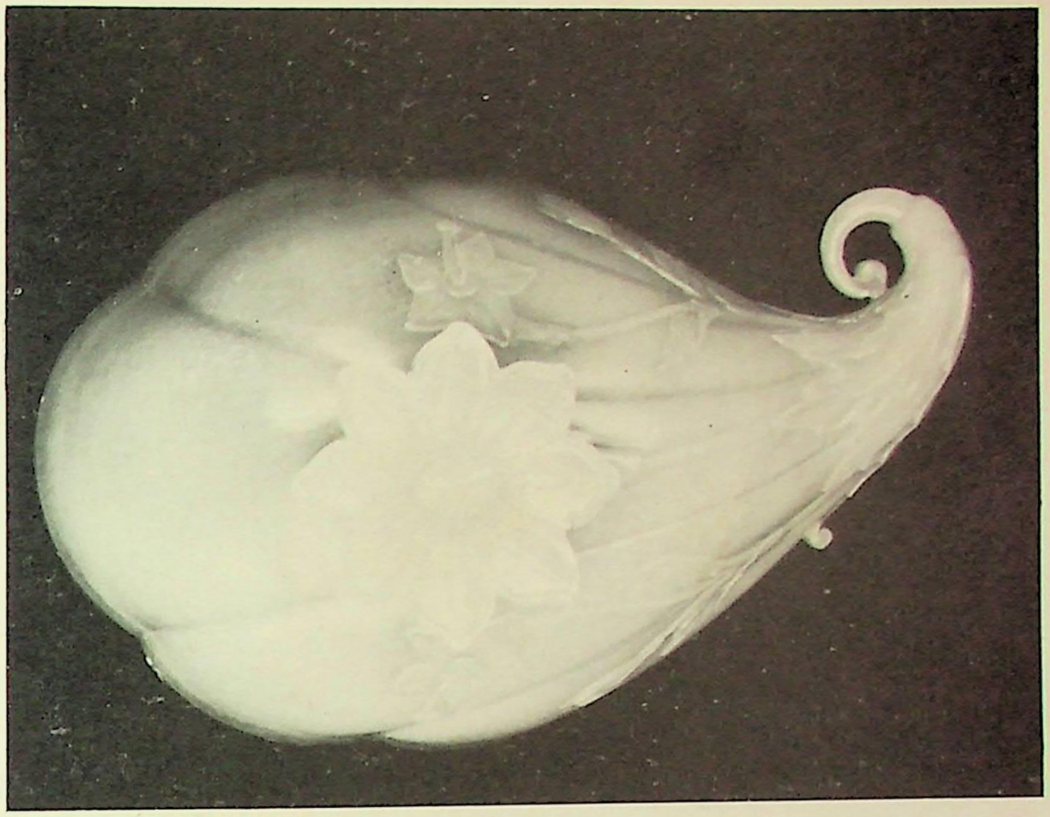
Jewelled ornaments like this were designed to be worn on the front of the turban. This fashion replaced the tradition of wearing plumes or feathers secured by brooches, and remained in vogue as formal wear until the nineteenth century. Although the jewelled aigrette seems a typically Mughal form of ostentation, it was probably adopted as a result of the influx of European portraits, notably those of King James I, which showed noblemen sporting similar jewels.
This example is in the form of a floral spray, and is set with rubies, diamonds, emeralds and pale beryls.

19 Helmet
17th century (2nd quarter), Mughal
Steel damascened with gold; 17 x 15.2 cms.
Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur

This helmet is designed to be worn over a turban, and imitates the shape of those worn by the courtiers of Shah Jahan's time, with the addition of a protective plate at the front. It even goes so far as to imitate the flowered brocade material of the turban in an exquisitely inlaid trellis pattern. This design in helmets was rare, the usual sort being based on the Iranian hemispherical type; it may be that this decorative version, though still potentially functional, was reserved for parades or other formal occasions.



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20 View of the exhibition: Decorative arts

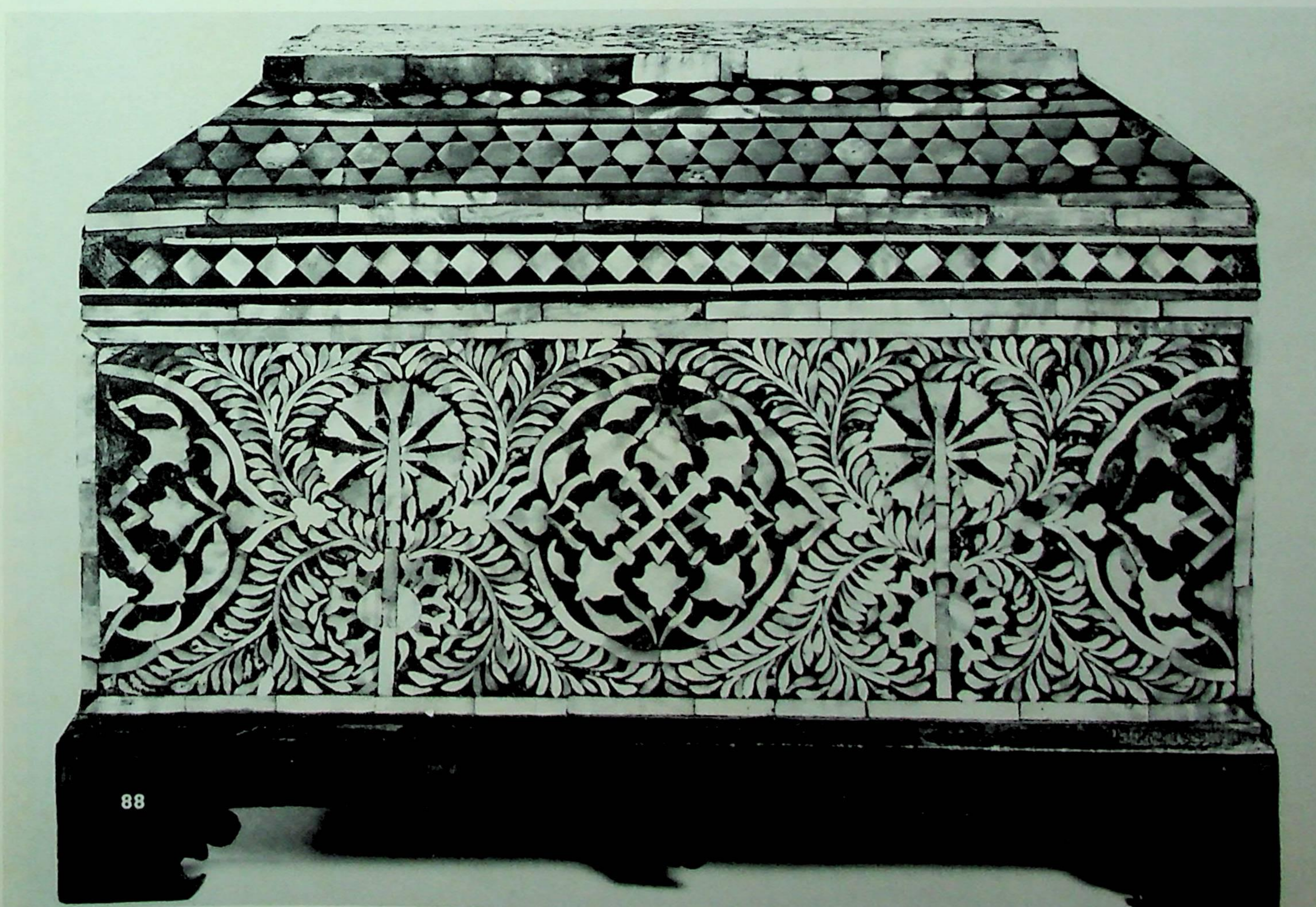
21 *Huqqa* base
Late 17th-early 18th century
Alloy, inlaid with silver and brass (*bidri*); 18.7 x 17.9 cms.
Private collection

22 *Huqqa* base
18th century, Mughal
Clear glass with painted decoration; 19.1 x 17.6 cms.
Los Angeles County Museum, Los Angeles

23 Ewer
17th century, Deccan
Alloy, inlaid with silver and brass (*bidri*); 28.5 x 18.4 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Many fine examples of *bidri* ware survive, but this stately ewer is one of the finest and earliest. The technique probably originated in the Deccan, taking its name from the town of Bidar. The decoration of floral arabesques on this ewer derives from Safavid Iranian design. A spurious inscription stating that it has been made for Timur was added around the top of the neck in the nineteenth century.

24 Casket
17th century, western India
Wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl in lac; 21.6 x 31.4 x 19.0 cms.
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford



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India Observed

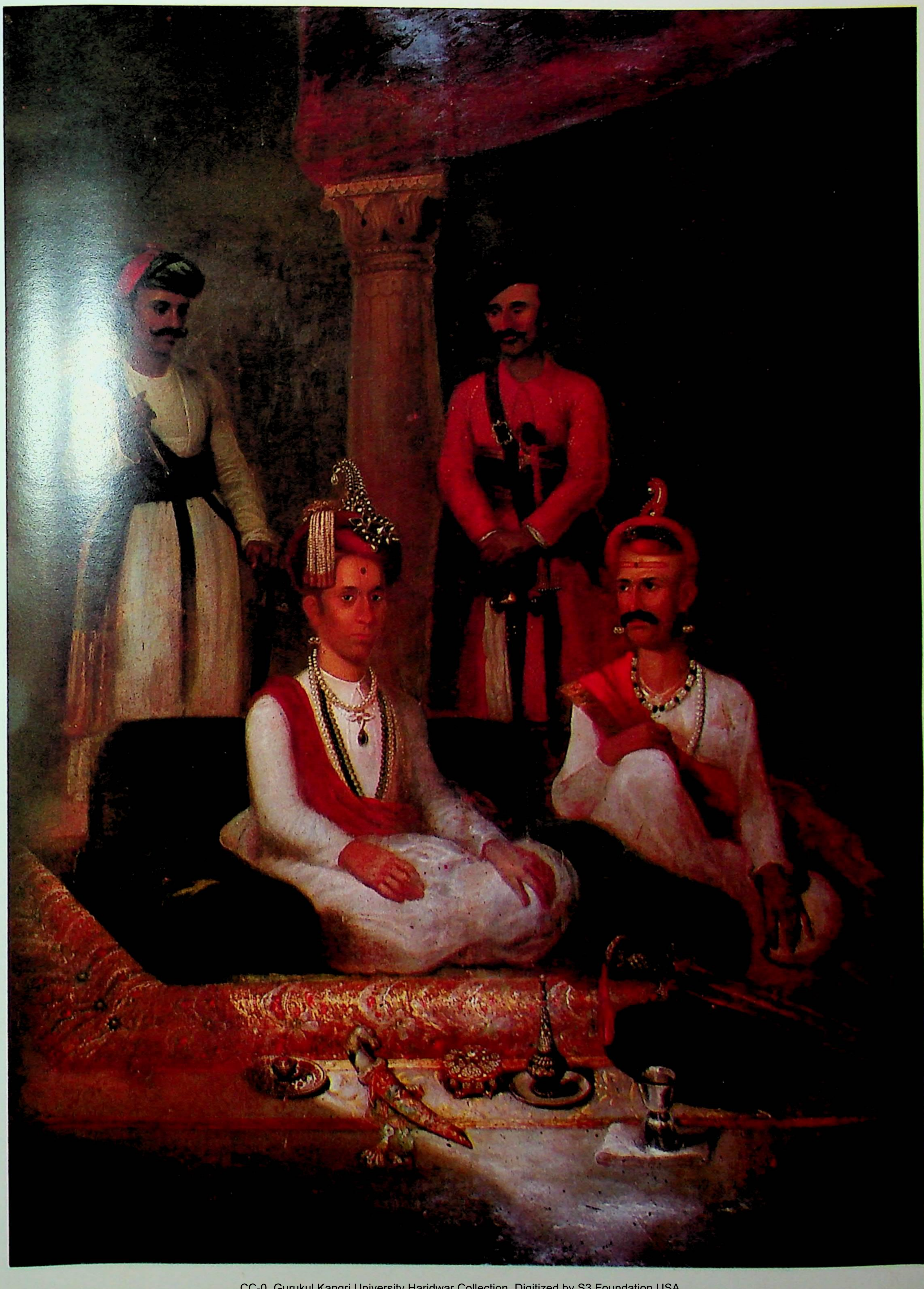
Among the many exhibitions mounted in London for the Festival of India, "India Observed" was unique. It endeavoured to illustrate the reactions of the British to India through the oil paintings, drawings, engravings and books produced by them during the century 1760-1860. Some two hundred items were displayed which vividly revealed the eager and sensitive British response to the country.

The books in the exhibition relating to the fifty years 1760-1810 were a sample of the wide research into Indian culture that was proceeding at that time. It was the Age of Enlightenment in Europe, and many of the East India Company's servants arrived in India with a desire to discover all they could about what, at first, seemed an enigmatic land. As early as 1767 John Holwell, popularly known only for his monument to the "Black Hole", published four learned essays on the Hindu religion and its chronology. By the 1780s a brilliant group of Company servants surrounding Warren Hastings were energetically exploring diverse aspects of Indian culture. Charles Wilkins was studying Sanskrit and translating the *Bhagavad-Gita;* Henry Colebrooke was working on Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindu Law and the Vedas; Nathaniel Halhed was occupied with Hindu Law; Samuel Davis, with astronomy; while Colonel Alexander Dow, Jonathan Scott and William Francklin were engaged in writing histories of India. The first maps based on ground surveys were being produced by James Rennell. Engineers officers were making contributions to the study of natural history. Classical Indian architecture and sculpture was also arousing interest, especially the rock-cut shrines of western India and the great temples of the south. Illustrated manuscripts and miniature paintings were being collected by Richard Johnson. Greatest of all the scholars was Sir William Jones, who founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 with its journal; *Asiatick Researches*.

At the same time as this intellectual exploration was proceeding, a number of professional British artists were going to India and depicting its people, countryside and monuments. Tilly Kettle was the first professional painter to gain access to Indian rulers—in Madras to Muhammad Ali, Nawab of the Carnatic, and at Faizabad to Shuja-ud-daula. At Lucknow John Zoffany painted Asaf-ud-daula, while at Poona James Wales portrayed the Maratha Peshwa, "Madhu Rao Narayan". Portraits such as these gave the British a vivid first-hand record of courtly dress, jewellery, textiles, weapons and metal artefacts. A survey of *The Manners, Costumes and Customs of the Hindoos* (1796-99) was made by Balthazard Solvyns, whose engravings catch the dignified and often tragic air of the working people of Bengal. Arthur William Davis, during 1792, made a sympathetic study of occupations including weaving, metal-working, salt-making, coin-making, potting and paper-making. Other artists depicted festivals and ceremonies such as village weddings or south Indian temple processions. All these pictures gave a first-hand view of Indian life ranging from court to village.

But perhaps the greatest achievement of the early period was the recording of the landscape and architecture of India. Printed books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had sometimes been illustrated with views of Indian palaces and temples, but these had all been supplied by professional engravers who had never visited India and were working after drawings made on the spot by European amateurs or by Indian artists. After 1780, however, a series of skilled British professional artists visited India and keenly observed the country through the eyes of contemporary European taste with its passion for the Picturesque and the Sublime. The first was William Hodges, who had earlier accompanied Captain Cook on his second voyage to the Pacific. He arrived in Madras in 1780 and a year later moved on to Calcutta. During the next two years and a half he travelled up-country as far as Agra and Gwalior. He was patronised by Warren Hastings and Augustus Cleveland, both men of great culture, for whom he painted landscapes which ranged from Muslim and Hindu palaces, shrines and tombs to remote villages in Bihar. On his return to England, Hodges published forty-eight of his drawings between 1785 and 1788 as *Select Views in India* followed by *A Dissertation on the Prototypes of Architecture* (1787) and his *Travels* in 1793. Hodges was particularly interested in architecture, maintaining a view far ahead of his time: "that Egyptian, Hindu, Moorish and Gothic Architecture instead of being copies of each other, are actually and essentially the same,-the spontaneous produce of genius in different countries, the necessary effects of similar necessity and materials". The style of Hodges' pictures was as novel as his subject-matter. During his voyage with Captain Cook he had become keenly aware of atmospheric effects and the strange beauty of unusual shapes and forms. His work in India was influenced by these experiences and he brilliantly caught with an impressionistic technique, the rugged countryside or the towering shapes of Indian architecture silhouetted against lowering skies or the early morning light.

1 "Madhu Rao Narayan" the Maratha Peshwa with Nana Fadnavis and two attendants
James Wales, 1772
Oil on canvas; 228.6 x 190.4 cms.
Royal Asiatic Society, London





The most comprehensive view of the Indian landscape and its monuments, however, was given through the work of Thomas Daniell and his nephew William. These two artists visited India between 1786 and 1793. They covered a much wider area than Hodges; for they journeyed upcountry from Calcutta as far as Delhi and on to Hardwar, with a detour into Garhwal in the lower Himalayas. They returned through Lucknow and explored new areas in Bihar. In south India, as a result of a lull in the Mysore wars, they were able to travel from Madras through Mysore down to Cape Comorin and back through Rameshvaram and Tanjore. They also visited western India and, in company with James Wales, saw the rockcut temples of Elephanta, Kanheri and Salsette Island. They worked tirelessly, making hundreds of drawings, from which they were able to work up oil paintings for sale at lotteries in Calcutta and Madras. After their return to England they continued to produce oil paintings of India for discriminating patrons and for exhibition at the Royal Academy and the British Institution. At the same time, between 1795 and 1808, they produced their great work, *Oriental Scenery,* consisting of 144 superb aquatints. These gave the most comprehensive view of India to date, depicting the countryside and its monuments over a wide area of India. Their style accorded with the current principles of classical ideal landscape and was therefore easily acceptable in England both to sophisticated circles and to the general public with an interest in India. At the same time their subjects were often completely novel, showing little-known areas of India such as the Garhwal hills, remote temples and waterfalls in Bihar or Tinnevelly as well as the great hill-forts where the British had fought during the Mysore wars. Few of these places had previously been depicted.

A supplement, as it were, to their work was provided by Henry Salt, the artist who accompanied Lord Valentia on his Grand Tour of India during 1802 and 1803. He made numerous fresh and lively water-colour sketches during their travels in both upper and south India, some of which were aquatinted in 1809 for *Twenty-four Views taken in St. Helena, the Cape, India, Ceylon, Abyssinia and Egypt.* Eleven of these views depicted scenery and monuments in India which had not been engraved by the Daniells.

Several other professional artists further widened the British knowledge of the Indian scene. Robert Home accompanied the army during the Third Mysore War and published views of the great hill-forts where engagements had taken place between the British forces and those of Tipu Sultan. William Westall, on his return to England after the Flinders Expedition to Australia, stopped off at Bombay in 1804 and made sensitive drawings of the scenery and monuments of western India. He caught the strange shapes of the western Ghats and the cloud effects of the monsoon. A very personal vision of India was given by James Moffat, a little-known engraver in Calcutta, who worked up drawings by amateur artists into delightful naive aquatints with formalised foliage and doll-like figures.

At the same time numerous Company servants, both civil and military, were making highly skilled water-colours of the scenes around them, some of which were later published in England as aquatints. Before coming to India, Company servants, especially the military, had received instruction at their colleges from well-


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2 Muhammad Ali Walajah, Nawab of the Carnatic (1749-95)
Tilly Kettle, Madras, 1770; Oil on canvas; 242.6 x 151 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London

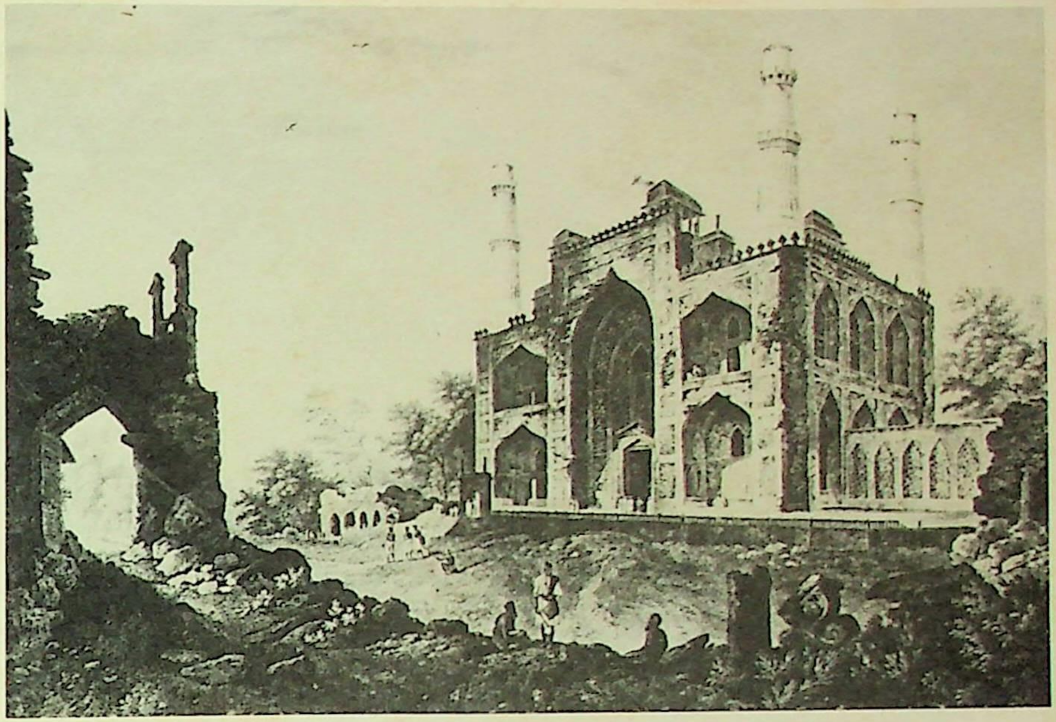
3 Dancing girls, Madras
Thomas Hickey, *c.* 1805 Oil on canvas; 123.8 x 100 cms. Private collection
Although British artists were not able to portray ladies of quality since these were kept in seclusion, they painted village women and dancing girls and also made charming portraits of the Indian *bibis* with whom many of the British had settled relationships at this time, when few Englishwomen ventured to India.

4 A Muslim lady seated, holding the stem of her *huqqah*
Francesco Renaldi, 1787; Oil on canvas; 70 x 56 cms. Private collection



known drawing-masters such as William Alexander, William Sawrey Gilein and Thomas Medland. In the days before the invention of the camera, drawing was essential for survey work of many kinds. It also helped while away the lonely hours spent by many officers when on tour in remote areas. A spate of drawings was made by army officers in the course of the slow-moving Mysore wars against Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. Elisha Trapaud, Robert Colebrooke, Alexander Allan and Sir Thomas Anbury were amongst the many skilled amateurs whose drawings were later published. Francis Swain Ward, who had trained as an artist before entering the Company's army, even made large oil-paintings depicting the countryside and the great temples of South India, as well as Sher Shah's mausoleum at Sasaram in Bihar. Through the published work of amateurs many little-known areas and monuments were brought to the notice of the British public; but because so many of their drawings have lain hidden in family collections, the scope and high quality of their work has never received sufficient recognition.

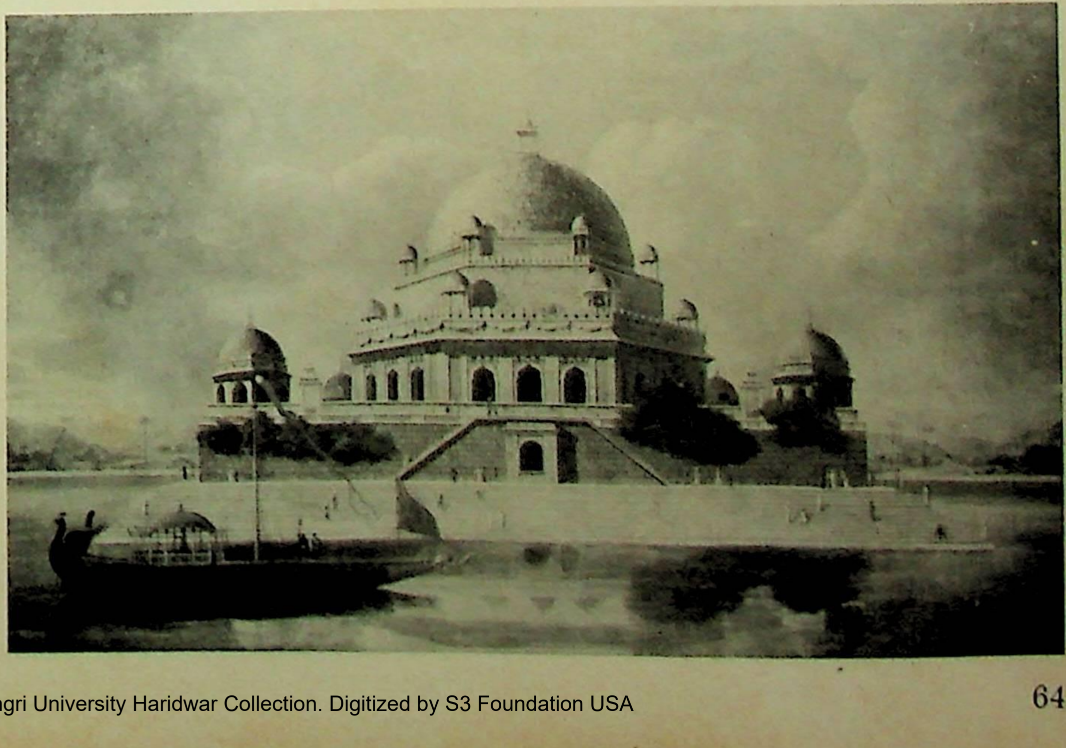
During the period 1810-25 India was being observed from a new angle. The vogue for sublime landscapes and great monuments was giving way to more intimate rural scenes. The chief exponent of this vision was George Chinnery, a professional artist who had worked in Madras from 1802 and moved to Calcutta in 1807, where he stayed until 1825. Although he earned his living by portrait-painting, he loved to relax by sketching the countryside. He filled sketchbook after sketchbook with rapid fluent drawings of village scenes with thatched huts, bullock carts, cattle and goats. He drew ruined tombs and shrines, the great rivers with slow-moving boats and villagers busy in the fields. Chinnery's work became highly popular and Calcutta residents competed to take lessons from him. Soon a whole group of amateurs were drawing the country-side in a Chinneryesque manner. Outstanding



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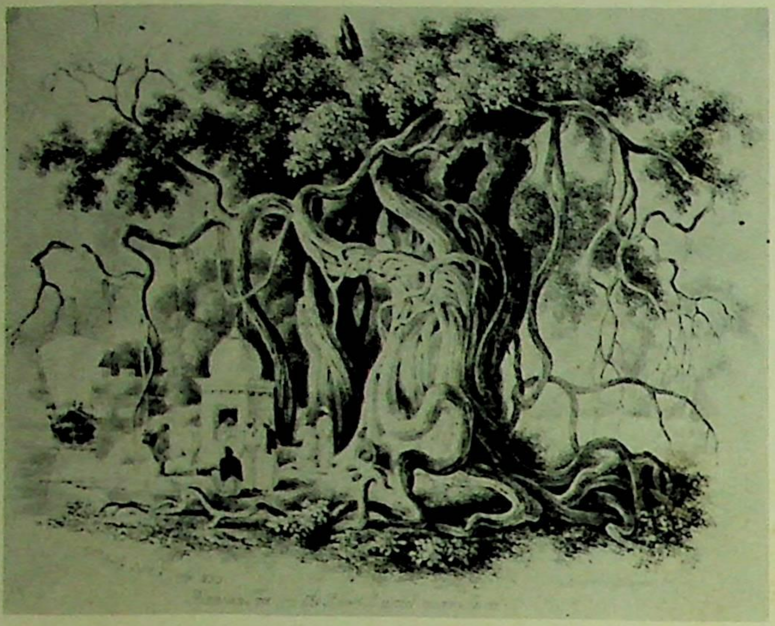
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5 A *Sati*
James Atkinson, 1831
Oil on canvas; 91.5 x 71 cms.
India Office Library and Records

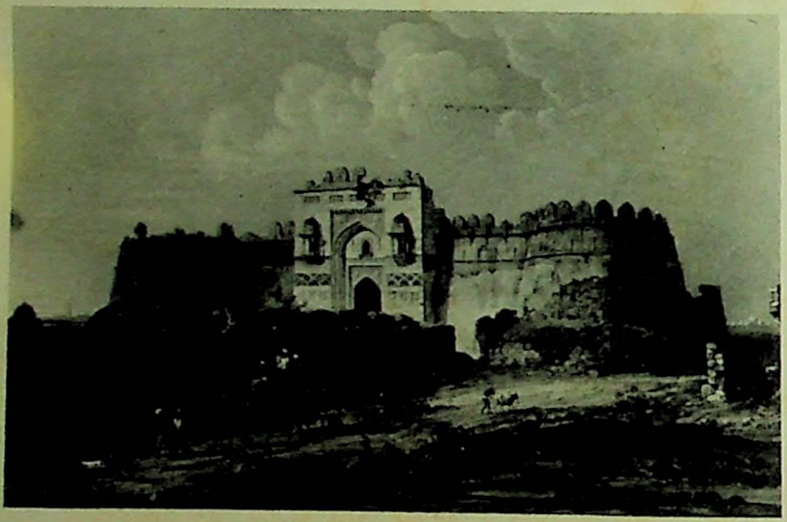
6 Entrance gateway to Akbar's Mausoleum, Sikandra, near Agra
J. Brown, 1 May, 1786, after a drawing by William Hodges, made in February or March 1783
Engraving; 46.5 x 62.5 cms.
India Office Library and Records

7 A Muslim tomb, possibly on the banks of the Hooghly River, Bengal
Thomas Daniell, *c.* 1811
Oil on canvas; 51 x 69 cms.
Private collection

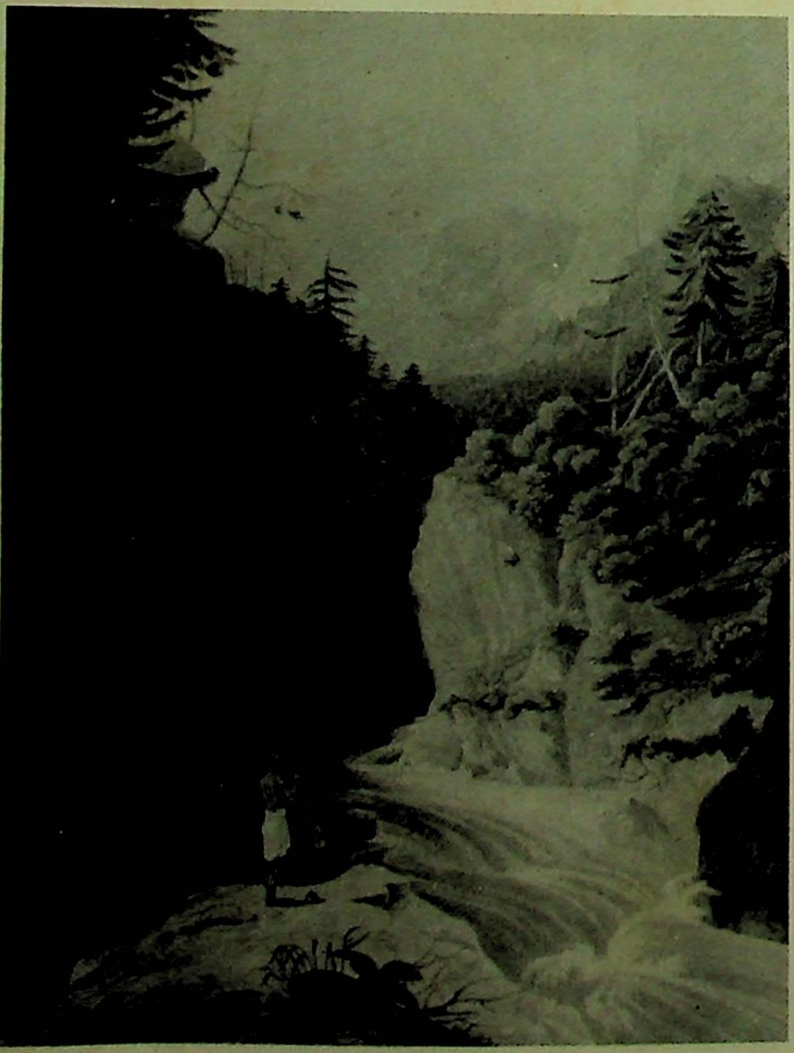
8 Sher Shah's Mausoleum, Sasaram, Bihar
Francis Swain Ward, *c.* 1770
Oil on canvas; 81 x 129.5 cms.
India Office Library and Records



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among these was a Calcutta merchant, William Prinsep, and a Company servant, Sir Charles D'Oyly. Throughout his career in India from 1798 to 1838, the latter was an indefatigable sketcher of the countryside with its great banyan trees, small temples and busy villages. When posted to Patna during 1821-32, he formed a local art society. Having acquired a lithographic press from England, he encouraged his friends to print their sketches for a periodical, *The Behar Lithographic Scrapbook.* The drawings of this period helped to create an image of village India which has persisted in England until the present day.

During this period new parts of India were fast being opened up to administration by the British. After the capture of Delhi in 1803 and the defeats inflicted on the Marathas and the Pindaris, amateur artists had access to areas rich in Muslim monuments. After the siege of Bharatpur in 1824 places such as Mathura became familiar. Meanwhile in 1814 the Nepal wars had revealed parts of the Himalayas such as Sirmur and Almora and renewed attention to Garhwal. Colonel Robert Smith and Sir Ezekiel Barton were two army officers who soon took advantage of these developments and produced skilled oils and water-colours of the hills. Robert Smith, while Garrison Engineer and Executive Officer in Delhi from 1822 to 1830, spent his leisure hours painting the many tombs and forts. James Manson, when taking part in a mineral survey in the Himalayas in 1823-8, made charming drawings of the villages near Almora. Most impressive of all perhaps was the work of James Baillie Fraser, a Calcutta merchant. After visiting his brother William, who was taking part in the Nepal war, he made an expedition in 1815 into the Himalayas up to the sources of the Jumna and the Ganges. The superb aquatints engraved in England from his water-colours by Robert Havell and published in 1820 as *Views in the Himala Mountains,* catch the splendour of the snows and the forested mountains, which reminded Fraser of his native Scotland. At the same time Captain Patrick Waugh was delighting in the architecture and landscape of Rajasthan. While serving there between 1819 and 1829 he made careful drawings which were later used by Colonel Tod in his famous *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829-32). Until the coming of the railways and steamships, Company servants spent long spells in India and considerable time often elapsed before their drawings could be published. Hence there was often a delay before the British public was able to benefit from the drawings of amateurs. Charles Forrest's *A Picturesque Tour along the Rivers Ganges and Jumna* was publsihed in 1824, but his drawings had been made during 1807-8. Similarly Captain Robert Grindlay's splendid *Scenery, costumes and architecture chiefly on the Western side of India,* published in 1826-30, reproduced drawings made by himself, Captain Charles Auber and Lieutenant-Colonel John Johnson between 1804 and 1813. All this work vastly extended the British knowledge of India illustrating areas that were previously little known.

9 Banyan tree and shrine beside a river, Bihar
By Sir Charles D'Oyly, 1830
Lithograph; 25 x 30 cms.
Private collection

10 Main entrance to the Purana Qila, Delhi
Colonel Robert Smith, 1827
Oil on canvas; 61 x 91.5 cms.
Private collection

11 "Bhyramghattee" in the Himalaya Mountains
Robert Havell for *Views in the Himala Mountains,* 1820, after a drawing by James Baillie Fraser, 1815
Aquatint engraving; 67 x 57 cms.
Private collection

12 Tailor birds and fruit-bearing convolvulus
J. Forbes, 1813
Coloured aquatint; 30 x 23.5 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



TAYLOR BIRDS *and Fruit bearing* CONVOLVULUS.

W. Hooker fecit. Jam. Forbes. Bombay, 1768.

By the late 1820s India was again being observed in a new, a romantic manner. At this time social and political changes were rapidly taking place. The Company's trade monopoly had been abolished in 1813 and opportunities for making great fortunes were rapidly declining. The nabob and corruption were vanishing, but at the same time social intercourse on easy terms with Indians was also declining. English public opinion with its strong Evangelical and Utilitarian attitudes was gradually making its influence felt on administration. As a result many of the British now began to see India not as a land with a rich culture to be enthusiastically explored but as a tragic country in need of "uplift", education and reform. The East India Company's policy of non-interference with Indian customs such as *sati* and hook-swinging and with *thuggee* was being vigorously questioned. As one British observer commented in 1832: "among the later writers on India, there have been some who . . . have scarcely allowed to this people the possession, in any degree or at any period, of either morality, literature, or science".

Nevertheless even now many of those living and working in India were still responding to the beauty of the countryside, the splendour of the monuments and the dignity of its people. But, when it came to depicting these subjects, their vision was being largely influenced by attitudes and literature current in England. At this time the poems of Thomas Moore, especially *Lallah Rookh*, first published in 1817, were highly popular. Moore's romantic imagery had been culled from miscellaneous literary sources and welded into a vague generalised view of the Orient best summed up as "exotic". Numerous lesser publications in England were using this same imagery when dealing with India – delicate damsels languished in palace *zenanas;* wandered in royal gardens; expired on funeral pyres or made offerings at shrines in landscapes dotted with palm trees, mango groves and temples. Even William Daniell, who as a young man had known India well, now produced paintings for the Royal Academy with titles such as "A Mohamedan lady presenting her Lord with a Rose" (1828), "The Favourite of the Harem" (1829) or "The Hindoo Girl's Offering" (1838). Illustrations of similar themes were also produced by him for the popular *Oriental Annual,* which flourished in England between 1834 and 1839.

These influences spread to India and soon numerous amateur artists were viewing India in these romantic terms. Fanny Parks and Mrs. Belnos, both energetic ladies who delved into Indian life, depicted village women with simpering sweetness. Emily Eden, sister of the Governor-General Lord Auckland, also gave a romantic view of "The Princes and People of India" during her long tour up-country in 1836-42. Even James Atkinson, a Company surgeon deeply involved at first hand with Indian life, painted *sati* and hook-swinging scenes in the same manner.

At this time the British were gaining access to new and spectacular parts of the subcontinent and amateur artists were quick to record their impressions. In western India Sind was acquired in 1843 and the army officers Captain Henry Francis Ainslie and Lieutenant William Edwards recorded the strange tawny desert scenes and the tombs with their brilliant tiles. Rajasthan with its picturesque rulers and great palaces was gradually being brought under British control and in 1847 after the Sikh Wars new parts of the Punjab Hills were opened up, giving access to Kashmir, which had already become a legend. The Hon. Charles Stewart Hardinge, son of the Governor-General, who had taken part in the Sikh Wars, was among the first to publish in his *Recollections of India* new scenes from Jammu and Kashmir. All these areas were viewed with a romantic eye that delighted in the newly revealed costume, architecture and landscape.

By this time holidays in the hill-stations during the hotweather had become popular. Numerous amateurs filled in their leisure time in Simla, Shrinagar or Ootacamund making romantic drawings of the villagers, mountains, lakes and forests. Some published their work as aquatints or, more frequently after 1830, as lithographs or line or steel engravings, which were gradually displacing the slower and more expensive process of aquatint. Between 1830 and 1860 there was a great vogue for the romantic travel book. Published side by side with those on Europe or the Holy Land, were lavish tomes on India depicting romantic scenery, fantastic architecture and exotic costume. The drawings for these made on the spot by amateurs such as Captain Robert Elliott, Lieutenant George Francis White, Lieutenant Thomas Bacon or James Fergusson were worked up by well-known illustrators such as David Roberts, T.C. Dibdin and even J.M.W. Turner. Lithography with its soft outlines, combined with white highlights and dark velvety shadows, led to some of the most poetic travel books ever produced.

During the same period 1830-60, several professional artists were visiting India and also viewing it with romantic eyes. Frederick Christian Lewis made three long visits to India between 1839 and 1866, concentrating on the Native States. He made portraits of the rulers showing them either alone or seated in durbar. A painting made at Udaipur shows Maharana Sarup Singh seated with a group of British officers headed by Sir Henry Lawrence as they endeavour to work out an agreement between the Maharana and his thakurs. Some of these paintings, fast falling into decay, still hang in the palaces of the rulers for whom they were made. After Lewis returned to England his father, a well-known engraver, worked up large mezzotints from some of his son's drawings. Through these the British obtained a glimpse of the splendours of Indian courts on occasions such as the installation of the Nawab of the Carnatic or the Nawab of Murshidabad and the dazzling pageantry of the Dashera Festival in Mysore.

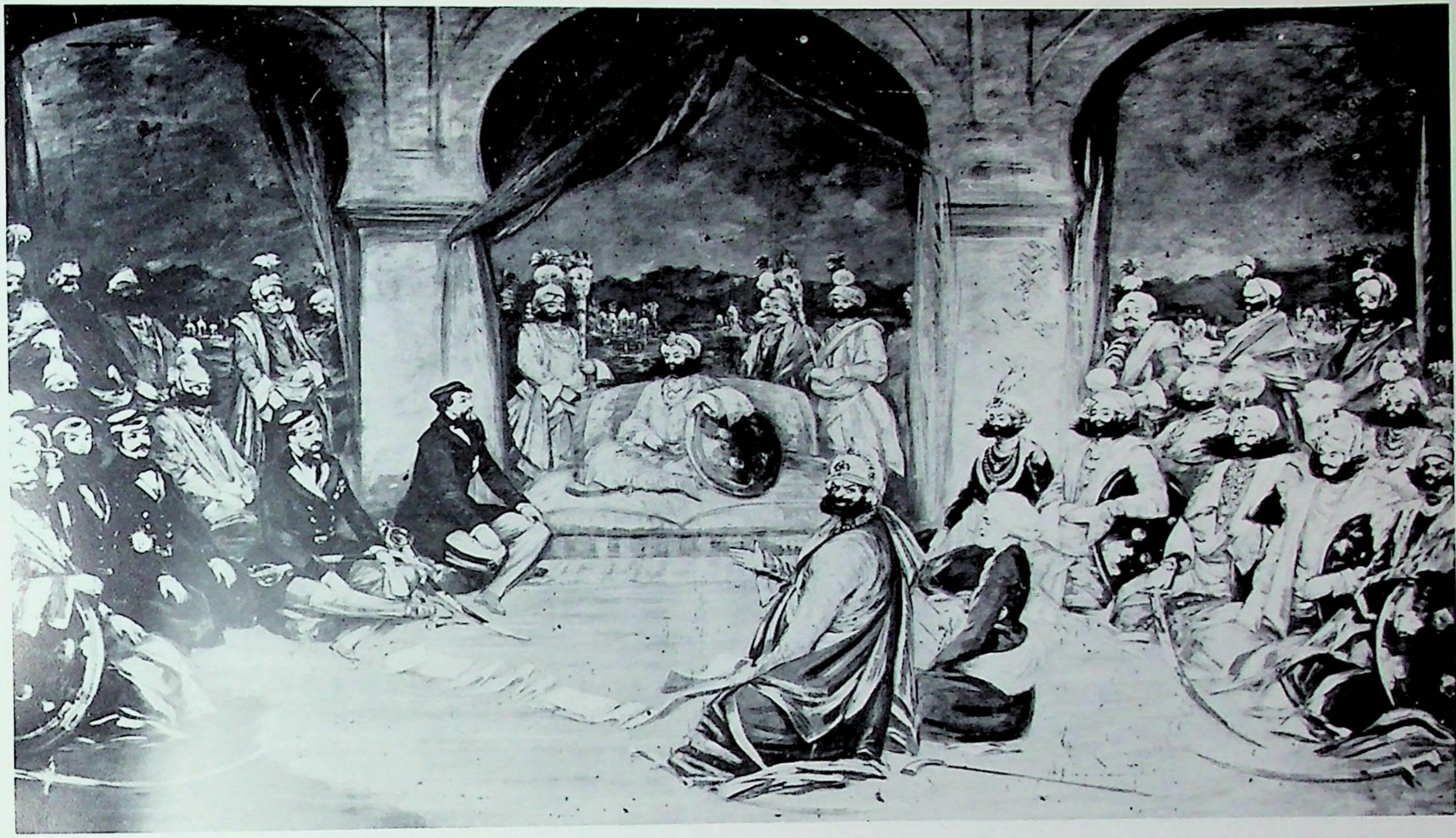
During 1852-6 William Carpenter, another professional artist, also toured widely in India, travelling first from Bombay to Calcutta via Ceylon and Madras. He then visited Delhi, Rajasthan and Central and western India as well as the Punjab and Kashmir. He often travelled rough, sometimes wearing the Indian dress. Unlike Lewis, he not only painted the rulers and their courts but also the local people and scenery. He particularly responded to the panache of the Sikhs and Dogras, and to the romantic landscape of Kashmir. When he returned to England it was scenes set in Kashmir that he chose for his Royal Academy paintings of India. Through the work of these artists wholly new and romantic aspects of India were revealed.

The exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum could only display a mere fragment of the vast mass of visual material relating to India that was produced during the years 1760-1860, but the examples chosen reflected the enthusiasm and sensitivity with which artists, both professional and amateur, had observed the Indian scene. The paintings, prints and books that they produced are not only beautiful in themselves but form an integral part of both British and Indian culture.

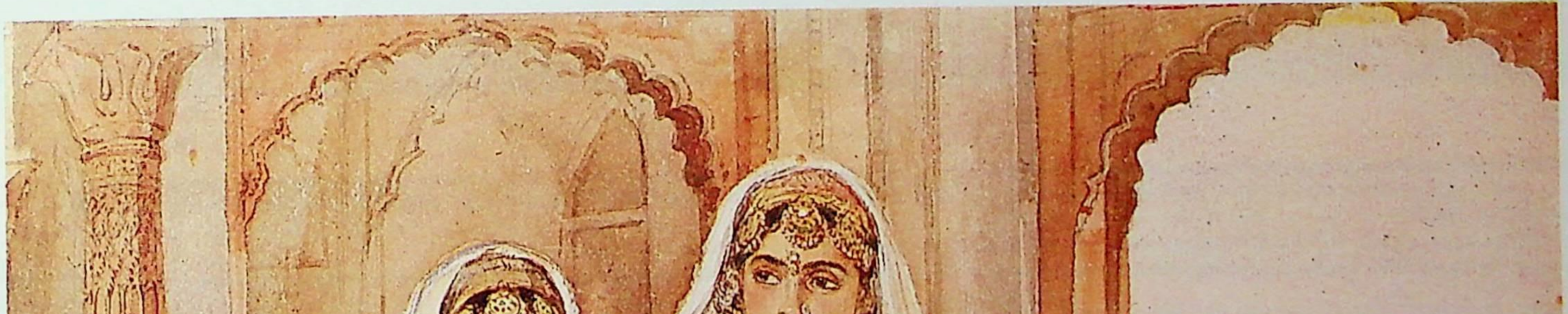
Mildred Archer

13 Darbar at Udaipur, Rajasthan
Frederick Christian Lewis, February 1855
Oil on canvas; 99 x 152.4 cms.
India Office Library and Records

14 Nautch girls, Shrinagar, Kashmir
William Carpenter, August 1834
Water-colour; 37 x 52.5 cms.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London



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The Art of the Book in



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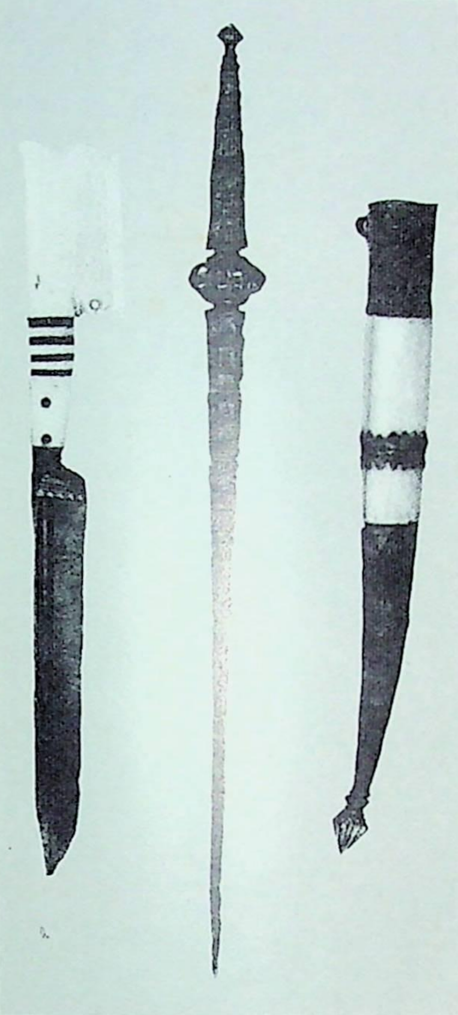
1 The Bodhisattvas Vajrapani (above) and Jaliniprabha
From a palm leaf manuscript of the 8000 *Prajnaparamita,* dated in the 15th regnal year of Ramapala, and copied in the monastery-university of Nalanda, *c.* 1097
ff. 92b, 93 (details); Folio 6.1 x 55.7 cms., miniatures 6 x 6 cms. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Sansk. a. 7
The fluent line and beautifully controlled modelling of this and other Ramapala-period manuscripts are typical of the Pala style at its classic peak.

2 The Jina Mahavira with attendants and worshippers; Wooden cover *(patli)* to a palm leaf manuscript, commemorating the visit of Jinadatta Suri to Marot in Rajasthan Late 12th century, Rajasthan. 5.5 x 29 cms. complete, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute, Ahmedabad, 884
The Jaina painting tradition of the protruding farther eye was already well-established by this date.

3 Iron stylus for incising palm leaves with knife for trimming,and erasing and sheath 18th century, Andhra Pradesh,Bodleian Library, Ms. Sansk. a. 1



India



The exhibition "Art of the Book in India" was held as part of the Festival of India in the British Library from April 16 to August 1, 1982. It traced the development of the illustrated and illuminated manuscript in India from its beginnings in the Buddhist monastic scriptoria of eastern India *c.* A.D. 1000 to the demise of the genre in the middle of the nineteenth century. It thus explored the entire repertoire of Indian painting through nine hundred years, bringing together the best examples of both provincial and metropolitan work. Moreover, it was also intended to demonstrate that Indian painting is, unlike European and Chinese painting, primarily one of the arts of the book and not an art form *sui generis* (unique). It is an altogether different aesthetic experience to see a great Mughal or Rajput painting in its true context, within a manuscript or album, where it forms a contribution to a larger work of art, from seeing it isolated within the dead frame of a mount on a wall. Thus the main criterion for the selection of exhibits was that the item form a recognisable manuscript, and only in instances where it proved impossible to obtain a complete manuscript in an important style were one or two folios in mounts included. All exhibitions have the function of bringing together works of art to ease the task of physical comparison, and the assembly of so many manuscripts in the Pala, Sultanate, Mughal and later styles proved particularly instructive for all who saw this exhibition.

Indian manuscripts are found in a large variety of forms, some of them of great impressiveness. The earliest were of palm leaves and birch bark, kept between wooden boards. The palm leaf manuscripts were long and narrow and written on parallel to the long side (the *pothi*). Even in the earliest survivals, birch bark manuscripts show more variety of shape than their counterparts on palm leaf—they are generally in *pothi* format but the size varies from the small to the large and sometimes they employ the scroll form. Early examples of paper manuscripts from the Himalayan regions again adhere to the *pothi* format, and usually are quite small. But by the twelfth century, in Nepal, manuscripts of this material were following the long and narrow shape of the palm leaves.

The Muslim conquerors of northern India, at the end of the twelfth century, brought paper with them to the plains of India for the first time. It was manufactured first in Iran and then in Indian centres, and Muslim manuscripts from India conform to the Middle Eastern codex. The Hindus and Jainas of northern and western India changed to this new material, but retained their *pothi* format until the eighteenth century, only gradually accepting the idea of sewing and binding their manuscripts. However, in other parts of India, paper was not generally accepted until the nineteenth century—in Orissa and the south, palm leaves remained supreme; in Kashmir birch bark (bound into codex form); and in Assam aloe bark. One of the most impressive cases in the exhibition contained just two huge Assamese manuscripts on aloe bark, one dyed pink ("the hue of the ripe pink cucumber"—Banabhatta's *Harshacharita*), the other yellow. This variety of shape and texture lent much

The central opening (end of the 11th chapter) in the middle of a palm leaf manuscript of the 8000 *Prajnaparamita*, which was copied in the 15th year of Gopala III at the monastery of Vikramashila (*c.* 1145)
ff. 163b, 164; Folio 6.8 x 41 cms., miniatures 6.8 x 7 cms., British Library, London, Or. 6902
There are 6 miniatures in all, the others being arranged similarly in pairs at the beginning and end of the manuscript. By this period, the classic Pala style was becoming slightly drier, although this dryness may simply reflect the style of a different atelier.

5 The Buddha in *dharmachakra mudra*, "setting in motion the wheel of the Law", and the six-armed form of Vasudhara, the Buddhist goddess of wealth, over whom cheerful urchins are pouring bags of money. From a manuscript of the *Vasudharadharani*, copied in the year 305 of the Nepalese era (1185) in the fifth year of the reign of Someshvaradeva (reg. *c.* 1180-5)
ff. 1b, 2; Folio 9.1 x 26 cms., miniatures 9.1 x 9 cms., British Library, London, Or. 13971A
Apart from the beauty of its miniatures (in the classic Nepalese style of the 12th century), which is enhanced by the alternating.

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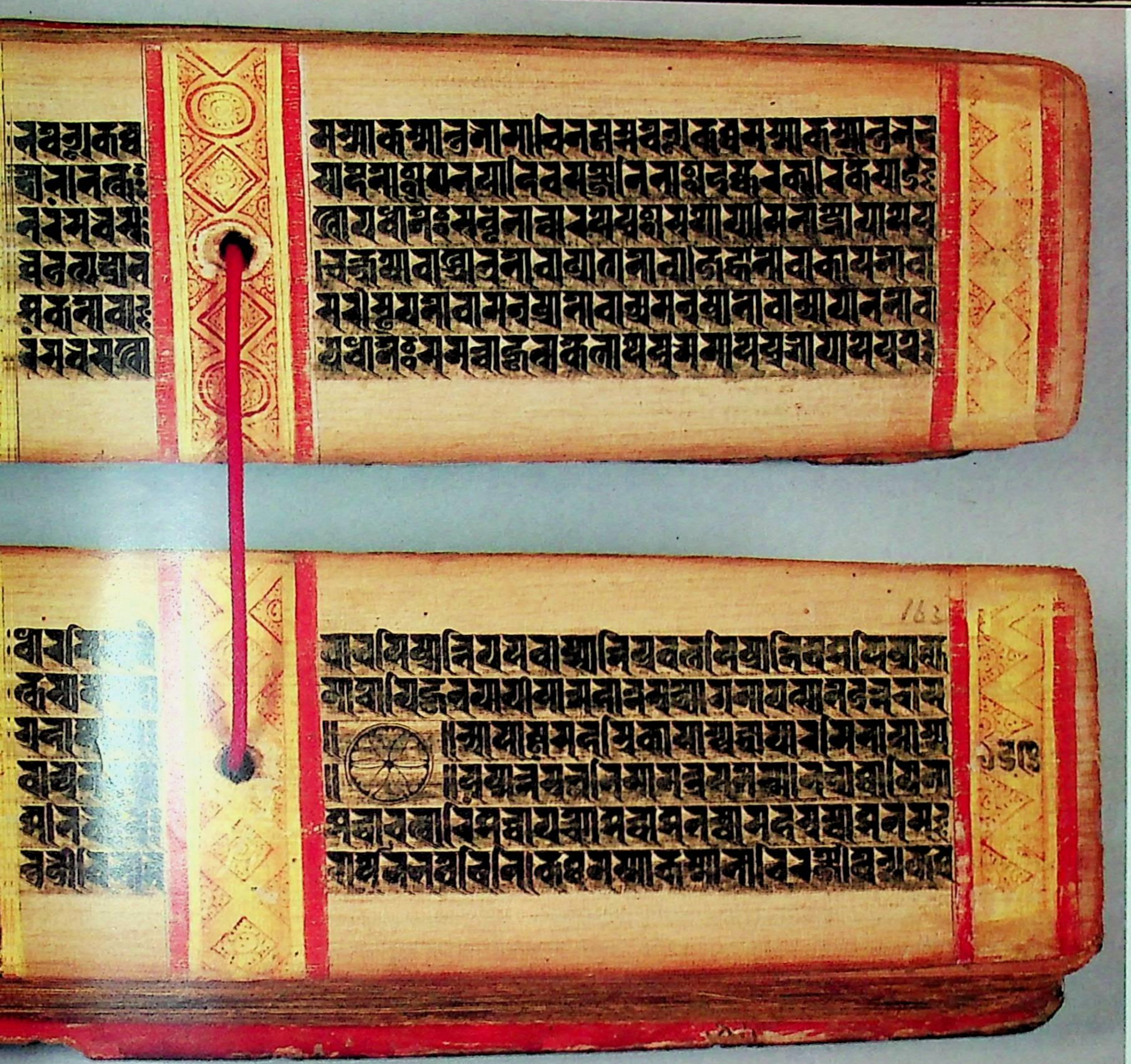


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4 The Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara—in his form as Simhanada (the Lion's Roar)—and Maitreya
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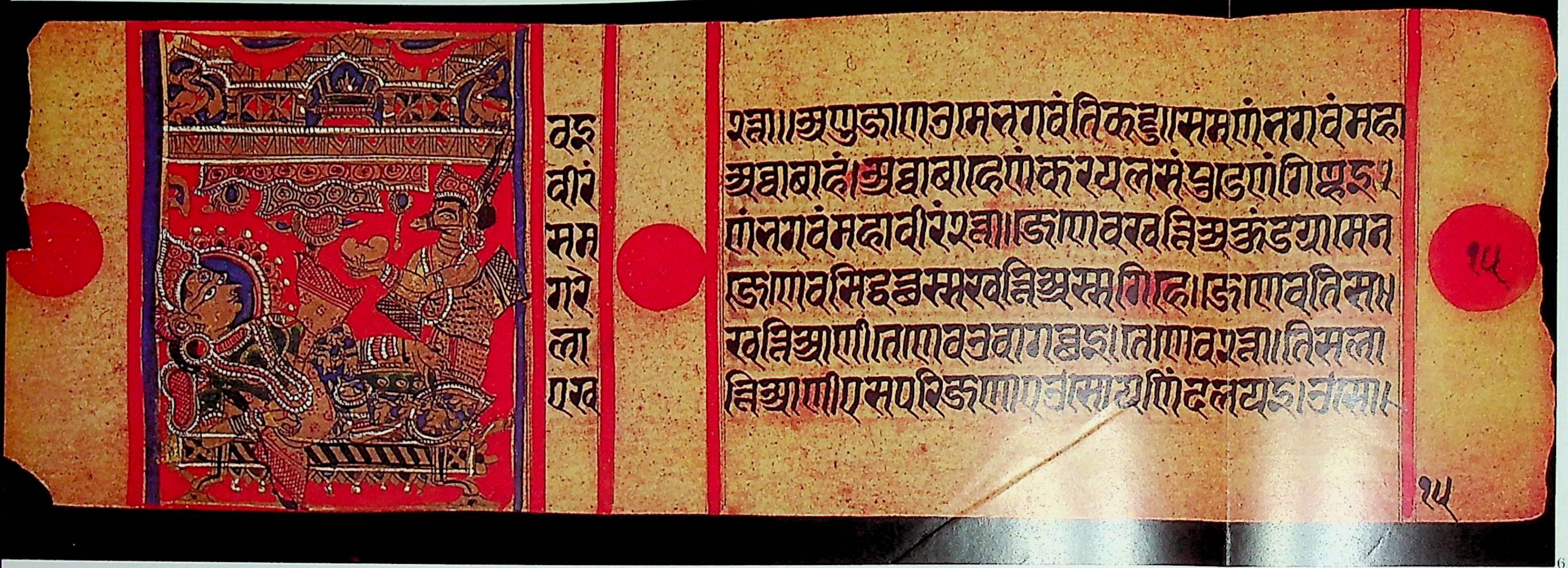
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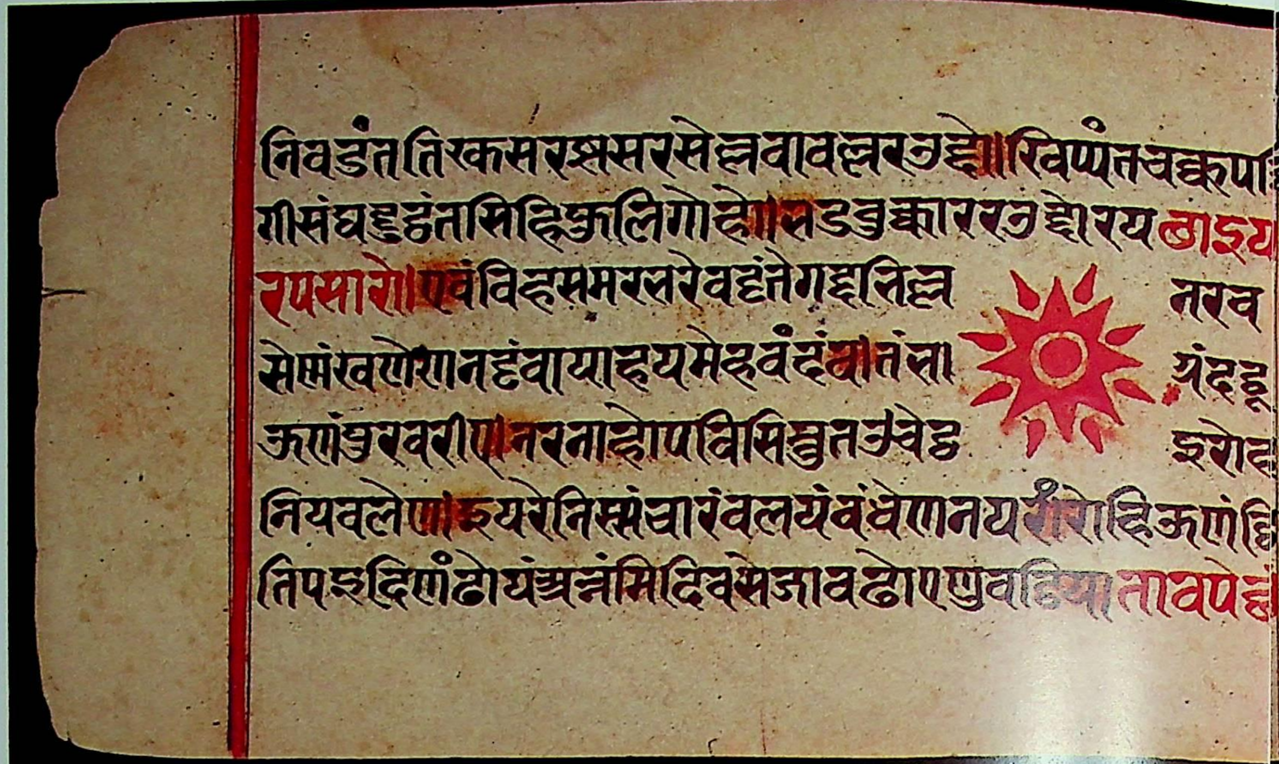




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visual interest to the exhibition over and above that of the paintings themselves, enhanced by an introductory section showing some of the materials which have been used in India over the millennia for writing on—stone, bronze, copper, gold, silver, wood, cloth, clay and ivory. Some of the formats to which, for religious purposes, the palm leaf can lend itself—three manuscripts in the shapes of a tortoise, a *shivalinga*, and a *rudraksha* rosary—also aroused much interest.

The Indian tradition has always accorded higher status to the spoken than to the written word. The Hindus saw no urgent need to write down their sacred books of divine revelation until comparatively late, and hence the arts of calligraphy, illumination and book illustration do not seem to have been widely practised by them before about the fifteenth century. But adherents of the other great Indian religious systems, the Buddhists and Jainas, needed to reconcile the differently remembered versions of the words of their human founders and hence early took recourse to the writing down of their complex canonical texts. A tradition records that the Buddhist canon was engraved on sheets of gold, and it is the Buddhist texts which comprise the earliest surviving Indian manuscripts that are calligraphically noteworthy, from about the fifth century A.D. However, the art of illumination and illustration of manuscripts does not seem to have been practised before about A.D. 1000, and appears to have been developed in the Buddhist monasteries of eastern India under the Pala dynasty to add magical protection to manuscripts of important Buddhist texts. Small paintings throughout a palm leaf manuscript of the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas, and other Buddhist divinities, form *mandalas* (sacred diagrams) whose composition and contemplation both protect the manuscript and bestow merit on artist



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and donor alike. These positive little images, scarcely three inches square, of serene and luminous Bodhisattvas almost belie the catastrophic decline of Buddhism in the land of its birth, where its death-knell was the Turkish conquest of eastern India shortly after 1200. The destruction of the Buddhist monasteries meant the end of this type of book-illumination in India, but the tradition was carried on in Nepal.

The Jainas in early medieval India were at their strongest in the western regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat. They too, about 1100, began to add miniatures of the Jainas and other divinities to the palm leaf manuscripts of their canonical texts, but again in no sense illustrating the narrative. The western Indian painting tradition had a more nervous and angular line than the fluently modelled eastern style, and this angularity comes more and more to the fore in succeeding centuries, especially after the change in the fourteenth century from palm leaves to paper. The Jainas and their manuscript traditions were far better able to withstand the shock of the Muslim conquest than the Buddhists, as their roots went far deeper into the populace than was the case with an increasingly monasticised Buddhism.

The coming of Islam to India introduced the alien book traditions of the Muslim people, and above all that of the Iranians. The format was the codex, the sewn and bound volume of vertical leaves, and the material paper. The Iranian tradition as practised in the court studios of the various rulers of Iran over the next two centuries developed into its classic pattern of beautiful calligraphy, panels of illumination in gold and ultramarine as frontispieces and chapter headings and exquisitely stylised miniatures illustrating the narrative. Little, however, is known of the earliest period of Muslim manuscript production in India. Those fragments of manuscript illumination which have surv
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1 The Bodhisattvas Vajrapani (above) and Jalinprabha
From a palm leaf manuscript of the 8000 *Prajnaparamita,* dated in the 15th regnal year of Ramapala, and copied in the monastery-university of Nalanda, *c.* 1097
ff. 92b, 93 (details); Folio 6.1 x 55.7 cms., miniatures 6 x 6 cms. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Sansk. a. 7
The fluent line and beautifully controlled modelling of this and other Ramapala-period manuscripts are typical of the Pala style at its classic peak.

2 The Jina Mahavira with attendants and worshippers; Wooden cover (*patli)* to a palm leaf manuscript, commemorating the visit of Jinadatta Suri to Marot in Rajasthan Late 12th century, Rajasthan. 5.5 x 29 cms. complete, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute, Ahmedabad, 884
The Jaina painting tradition of the protruding farther eye was already well-established by this date.

3 Iron stylus for incising palm leaves with knife for trimming,and erasing and sheath 18th century, Andhra Pradesh,Bodleian Library, Ms. Sansk. a. 1







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4 The Bodhisattvas Avalokiteshvara—in his form as Simhanada (the Lion's Roar)—and Maitreya
The central opening (end of the 11th chapter) in the middle of a palm leaf manuscript of the 8000 *Prajnaparamita*, which was copied in the 15th year of Gopala III at the monastery of Vikramashila (*c.* 1145)
ff. 163b, 164; Folio 6.8 x 41 cms., miniatures 6.8 x 7 cms., British Library, London, Or. 6902
There are 6 miniatures in all, the others being arranged similarly in pairs at the beginning and end of the manuscript. By this period, the classic Pala style was becoming slightly drier, although this dryness may simply reflect the style of a different atelier.

5 The Buddha in *dharmachakra mudra*, "setting in motion the wheel of the Law", and the six-armed form of Vasudhara, the Buddhist goddess of wealth, over whom cheerful urchins are pouring bags of money. From a manuscript of the *Vasudharadharani*, copied in the year 305 of the Nepalese era (1185) in the fifth year of the reign of Someshvaradeva (reg. *c.* 1180-5)
ff. 1b, 2; Folio 9.1 x 26 cms., miniatures 9.1 x 9 cms., British Library, London, Or. 13971A
Apart from the beauty of its miniatures (in the classic Nepalese style of the 12th century), which is enhanced by the alternating.

6 The transfer of the foetus of Mahavira from the *brahmani* D
From a manuscript of the *Kalpasutra*, undated
ff. 15b, 16; Folio 8.5 x 28 cms., miniatures 8.5 x 6 cms., Lalbl
The shape and style of the mansucript denote a relatively early
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of this text.

7, 8 Kalaka turns the bricks to gold, for supplies for the Sahi's
of the Sahi and the king of Ujjain
From a manuscript of the *Kalakacharyakatha*, undated
ff. 9b, 10; Folio 10 x 29.5 cms., miniatures 10 x 7.5 cms., Lalb
The manuscript closely resembles in style the famous *Kalpasut*
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These new traditions profoundly influenced the Indian tradition, especially that of western India. The most obvious influence was, of course, the adoption of paper, but Hindu and Jaina manuscripts kept for centuries to the *pothi* format which they had used for palm leaves. The narrative illustration of Persian manuscripts impinged on the Indian iconic tradition by the latter half of the fourteenth century, when for the first time the Jaina *Kalpasutra* is found illustrated with scenes depicting the life of Mahavira, the last Tirthankara of the Jaina system. A more subtle influence is that exercised by the production methods of Iranian painters and their comparative freedom of composition, which seem to have induced the production of Jaina manuscripts with illustrations painted by professional artists rather than by monks and free of the rigid iconographical norms imposed by the monasteries. There is some evidence that professional artists of this kind were Hindu *kayasthas* from Bengal, professional scribes who also sometimes illustrated their manuscripts. It is at this period that we first find illustrated manuscripts of Hindu texts.

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From a manuscript of the *Kalpasutra*, undated
ff. 15b, 16; Folio 8.5 x 28 cms., miniatures 8.5 x 6 cms., Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute, Ahmedabad, III. MS. no. 105
The shape and style of the mansucript denote a relatively early date of about 1400, as does its fine calligraphic hand. The miniatures are in an early version of the popular style so abused later in the century in mass-produced manuscripts of this text.

7, 8 Kalaka turns the bricks to gold, for supplies for the Sahi's army; and the battle between the armies of the Sahi and the king of Ujjain
From a manuscript of the *Kalakacharyakatha*, undated
ff. 9b, 10; Folio 10 x 29.5 cms., miniatures 10 x 7.5 cms., Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute, Ahmedabad, III. MS. no. 103
The manuscript closely resembles in style the famous *Kalpasutra* from Mandu of 1439, and may be assigned to the same city at a slightly earlier date, *c.* 1430-35. The artists of both manuscripts have adopted the high horizon of Iranian painting, but prefer to remain at the horizontal viewpoint rather than adopt the high viewpoint which allows simultaneous action in both fore-ground and middle-ground to be depicted. For this purpose, this artist prefers to use different registers.

9 The *gopis* call on the trees and plants of the forests of Brindaban to tell them where Krishna has disappeared to
From a palm leaf manuscript of the *Rasakrida* in the 10th canto of the *Bhagavata Purana*; *c.* 1725, Orissa, ff. 12b, 13; Each 4.5 x 37 cms., British Library, London, Or. 11689
The Orissan school of incising drawings on palm leaves is documented from the late 17th century. The earliest examples were usually inked, and colour applied only sparingly on a few key folios, as here, in a manuscript in which only four leaves have any colour. The effect of the Orissan style depends on a delicate balance between a highly ornamented line and the blank ground of the leaf itself. The over-application of colour in later examples destroys this precisely calculated relationship, and the effect becomes far too fussy, but here the colour adds to the charm of this pretty scene.



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to have been a stimulus to write down texts which might otherwise be lost for ever, while the general developments in book illustration in India after 1200 must have stimulated Hindus into commissioning illustrated manuscripts of their texts. But whereas the Jaina illustrated manuscripts had some centuries of tradition to draw upon and fairly rigid compositional structures to be copied from manuscript to manuscript, the Hindus seem to have had no such traditions and the artists were consequently free to follow their own imaginations in illustrating Sanskrit texts such as the *Chaurapanchashika, Bhagavata Purana, Gita-Govinda,* and so on. The earlier nervousness of line of the Jaina school has been smoothed into a rhythmically vital and brilliantly coloured technique of intense vitality in its best examples. It is this school which developed a century later into the court styles of Rajasthan.

There was considerable cross-influence among all the Indian schools of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and these latter developments in the illustration of Hindu manuscripts influenced in their turn the developments of styles at the Indian Muslim courts. Our knowledge of this period is extremely sketchy, as so few of the manuscripts have colophons with dates and provenances. The Muslim courts of Mandu and Bengal are known to have had court studios, and similar ones must have existed in Delhi, Ahmedabad and Jaunpur. Paintings and illustrated manuscripts from the Deccan courts of Golconda, Bijapur and Ahmednagar in the latter half of the sixteenth century indicate that earlier schools must have existed at these courts, but no manuscript evidence is as yet available to prove it. Hindu Rajas, those of Chitor and Gwalior for example, must also have had studios, but again precise evidence is lacking.

The rulers of at least Mandu and Golconda



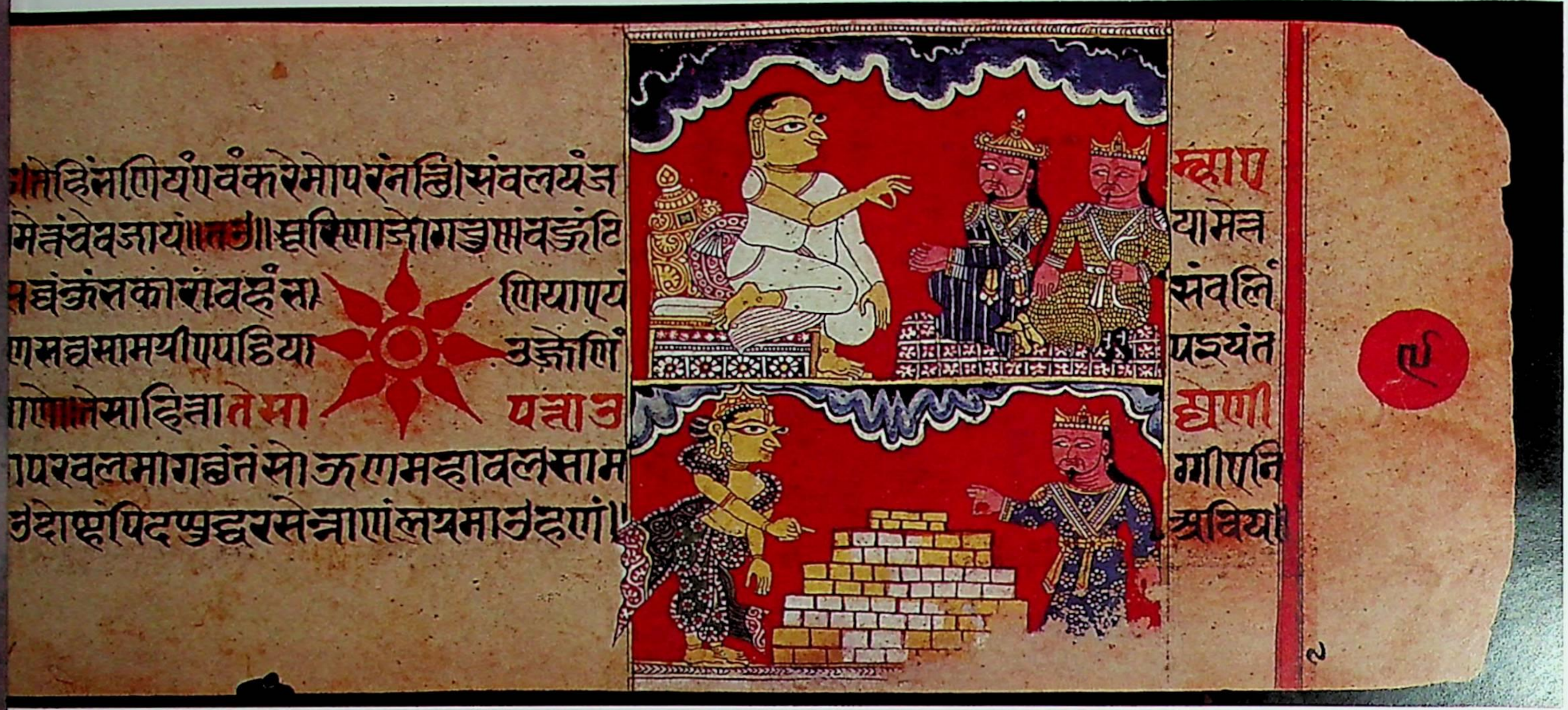
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10 Krishna sporting with the cowherds
From a manuscript on aloe bark of an Assamese translation of the first book of the *Brahmavaivarta Purana,* commissioned by King Purandara Singh and his queen in 1836
f. 3 (detail); 24.5 x 64.5 cms., complete
British Library, London, Or. 11387
The earliest Assamese illustrated manuscripts come from the Vaishnava *sattras* or monasteries in the late 17th century. Under the Ahom kings Rudra Singh (1696-1714) and his son Sib Singh (1714-44), a court studio flourished in Garhgaon, when the Assamese style underwent superficial Mughalisation. Comparatively few manuscripts were produced in the next 100 years, and this is the last of the great ones, in which the native Assamese style has triumphantly reasserted itself over the dessicated Ahom court-style. The paintings are the work of Durgarama Betha, whose vision of the Goloka heaven of Krishna and his consort is among the most charming of all Indian landscape stylisations.



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11 The *gopis* call on the trees and plants of the forests of Brindaban to tell them where Krishna has disappeared to
Details same as in caption 9



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imported artists from Iran occasionally, when in need of fresh influence, but it was the second of the Mughal emperors, Humayun (1530-56), who introduced the most comprehensive wave of Iranian influence from the Safavid court of Tabriz, when he returned from his enforced exile with a group of Tabriz painters headed by Mir Sayyid 'Ali and 'Abd as-Samad. Paintings produced for Humayun were in a purely Safavid idiom, but his son Akbar (1556-1605) early in his reign decided on an immense expansion of his manuscript studio and had perforce to recruit hundreds of Indian artists. They brought to the Mughal capital, Agra, a range of widely differing styles, which under the guidance of the two Safavid masters and, not least, of Akbar himself, were synthesised with the Safavid style into a unified Mughal style which Akbar used for the creation of large numbers of lavishly illustrated manuscripts.

The depiction of reality and the natural world in as three-dimensional a form as possible in a painting was the goal of Akbar's artists. Already by the 1570s they had learnt how to indicate recession in landscape or the modelling of features by foreshortening and other techniques which helped them to indicate spatial relationships: a different world already from the flatness of Iranian painting. From 1570 onward they had, to help them, increasingly large numbers of European prints and paintings, as European visitors came to the immensely wealthy court of the Grand Mughal bearing such things as presents, and many European details were henceforth incorporated into Mughal paintings.

Akbar, an ardent bibliophile, had, it is said, some 24,000 manuscript volumes in his library, a large proportion of which were produced for him specially. At the height of the studio's productive output in the 1580s, there must have been several hundred artists, with some thirty or forty masters, as well as calligraphers, illuminators, gilders, bookbinders and other craftsmen necessary for the production of fine volumes, not to mention the scholars working in the translation bureau and the poets and historians of the court. No previous Muslim ruler of any country could rival the size of Akbar's studio. He had copied and illustrated for him histories (of his own reign, of his ancestors, and of the world), the works of the Persian poets and Persian translations from the Sanskrit and Hindi literature of the majority of his subjects. In order to advance better comprehension and break down mutual barriers, he ordered copies of these latter to be distributed to his nobles.

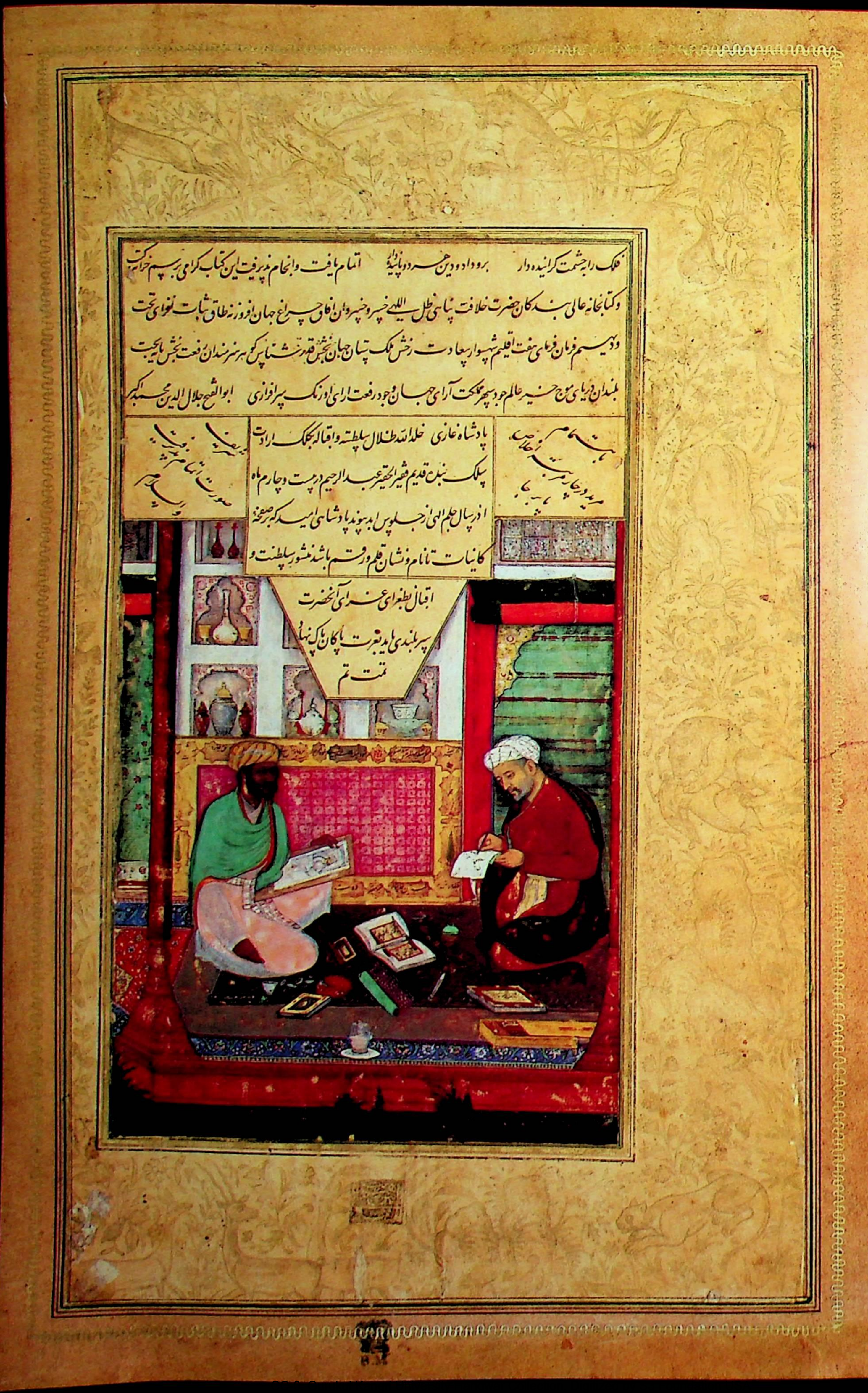
Akbar's successors were more interested in painting as an independent art, not subservient to the words of poets, which inevitably lessened their freedom as patrons. Under Jahangir (1605-27) and Shah Jahan (1627-58), the Mughal technique reached its greatest perfection, although accompanied by an ever-increasing stiffness, as the subject-matter was, with increasing frequency, the depiction of formal state occasions. Very few manuscripts were illustrated in the court studios during these reigns, although many earlier ones were added to, albums of paintings and calligraphy were busily assembled. The most remarkable aspects of Jahangir's albums are their borders. The Mughal imperial library remained intact until 1739, when Delhi was sacked by Nadir Shah and the accumulated treasures of two centuries were carried off to Iran. This traumatic event precipitated the break-up of the Empire, and great provinces such as Oudh, Bengal and the Deccan became independent in all but name.

Nobles and officers of state under Akbar and Jahangir also maintained libraries, and some, manuscript studios, where manuscripts were illustrated in styles derived from that of the court but often either with more direct Iranian influence or else reverting to a more Hindu style stemming from the pre-Mughal school. The patrons of the latter type of manuscript must have been the great Rajput nobles of Akbar's court, but there is as yet no evidence to allow us to make direct connections. Many of the Rajput courts in the seventeenth century maintained their own studios, differing greatly among themselves: some, such as that of Mewar, derived directly from the pre-Mughal school of Rajasthan; others being much more dependent on the Mughal example. The artists learnt certain techniques of indicating landscape and spatial relationships from the Mughal style, but used them sparingly and in their own ways. The schools developed at their own pace with greater or lesser Mughal influence according to the taste of their rulers, which likewise decided the balance struck between manuscript illustration and individual paintings. Rajput manuscripts were usually large-scale *pothis* of the Hindu scriptures and other Indian classics, with the text on one side of a folio and the picture on the other. Indian artists had never been happy with the Iranian concept of integration of text and illustration on the single page forming a harmonious whole but much preferred their separation. This they had achieved in the Mughal studio under Jahangir, and in the Rajput studios also they were able to do this, achieving by the end of the eighteenth century volumes which are more picture-books with a minimum of text than illustrated manuscripts.

In other parts of India, which were far from the Mughal court or had never been subject to it, traditional manuscript studios, royal or monastic, continued to produce illustrated manuscripts without any trace of Mughal stylistic influence. The origin of some of these styles can only be guessed at. In Assam, huge illustrated manuscripts on sheets of aloe bark are known from the seventeenth century, but the Assamese were producing manuscripts in this style since at least the seventh century. In Orissa there flourished from the same period a school of palm leaf illustration in which both pictures and script were incised onto the leaf by means of an iron stylus and afterwards inked; degrees of light and shade were achieved through a precise and delicate use of cross-hatching. Colour was sometimes applied sparingly. In the south flourished other schools whose styles seem dependent on that of the empire of Vijayanagar destroyed in 1565.

All these manifestly different schools were alike in one particular: they depended on enlightened patronage for their flourishing. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, as the Mughal empire crumbled and marauding tribes wrecked much of northern India, the traditional patrons were disappearing. Into their place stepped the British, who from their trading base in Calcutta had extended their political influence over much of the subcontinent by the end of the century. The new patrons, however, by and large did not want illustrated manuscripts or paintings in the traditional medium. They forced their artists to change to pale water-colour, to confine their subject-matter to standard sets of views, rulers, and "native types", and to render them in a more Europeanised style. The result, the "Company" style, in the hands of a master adds a new dimension to Indian painting in its truthfulness to the reality which it depicts. Such levels were achieved rarely. The advent of the camera gave this ruling class a much better instrument to record the mementoes which they wanted, and their patronage ceased. By the middle of the nineteenth century the camera and the printing-press together had brought about the end of the manuscript tradition.

Jeremiah P. Losty

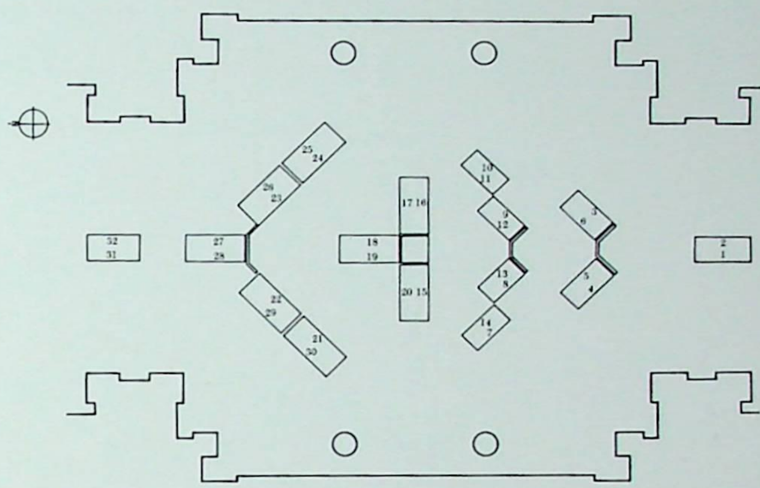

اتمام یافت و انجام پذیرفت این کتاب گرامی
ابوالفتح جلال الدین محمد اکبر
پادشاه غازی خلد الله ظلال سلطنته واقباله
فقیر الحقیر عبد الرحیم

12 The calligrapher 'Abd ar-Rahim being sketched by the painter Daulat, who pauses in his work to recharge his brush
From a manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Akbar by 'Abd ar-Rahim in 1595.
This painting, so the inscription informs us, was added by Daulat to the colophon page of one of Akbar's most beautiful manuscripts at the command of the Emperor of Jahangir. This was probably in 1605, the year of his accession, when other such additions and repaintings were commissioned by the new Emperor.
f. 352; Folio 26.5 x 15.5 cms., panel 19.5 x 10.8 cms., painting 13.2 x 10.8 cms. British Library, London, Or. 12208
Daulat was a pupil of Basavan, and had imbibed the latter's mastery of illusionism. Here depth is achieved in what otherwise would be a totally flat picture by the shading round the colophon panel, which suggests that the back wall soars up out of sight behind the text. Note the tools of the trade on the carpet – pen-box, pens, inkpots, gold-sprinkled paper, brushes, pots of paint, etc., and the brilliant handling of the glass and porcelain in the niches.

Exhibition Plan
The Art of the Book in India
British Library

Scale: 1:50

- I **Writing Materials**
  - 1 Copperplate, Silk, Birch-bark, etc.
  - 2 Paper, Palm-leaf, Stone
- II-III **Early Manuscript Illumination**
  - 3, 4 Pala
  - 5 Early Jaina
  - 6 Nepal
- IV-VII **Manuscript Illumination under the Delhi Sultanate**
  - 8 Delhi Sultanate
  - 9 Jaina
  - 10 Jaina, Buddhist
  - 11 Early Hindu
  - 12, 13 Later Sultanate Period
  - 14 Deccan
- VIII-X **The Imperial Library of the Great Mughals**
  - 15, 16, 17 Akbar
  - 18, 19 Jahangir
  - 20 Shah Jahan
- XI-XV **Delhi and the Provinces 1600-1850**
  - 21 Popular and Sub-Imperial Mughal
  - 22, 23 Mewar
  - 24 Rajput
  - 25 Deccan
  - 26 Provincial Mughal
  - 27 Late Mughal
  - 28 Orissa
  - 29 Assam
  - 30 Kashmir and North India
- XVI **The Coming of the Europeans**
  - 31 19th Century Indian Patrons
  - 32 Company Patrons



13 Alexander receives Roshanak, the daughter of Darius
From a manuscript of Nizami's *Sharafnama*, copied for Nusrat Shah, Sultan of Bengal, in 1531
f. 32; Folio 31 x 20 cms. British Library, London, Or. 13836
This recently discovered manuscript adds Gaur to Mandu as the only other indisputable provenance of Sultanate painting. Here the basic Shiraz style has been leavened with Indian elements – the horizontal viewpoint, the composition of an off-centre pavilion, and details of the architecture itself (the cusped arch, heavy projecting eave and supporting bracket, and the little *chhattri* on the roof).

14 Gifts being brought from a besieged fortress to Darab, including an elephant on wheels
Right page by Sanvala, left page by Kanha
From the *Darabnama*, or story of Darab, a Persian romance. The manuscript is now incomplete, but was apparently in production in the imperial Mughal studio from *c.* 1580-90
ff. 66b, 67; Folio 35.5 x 23 cms. British Library, London, Or. 4615
Characters in both these paintings wear Deccani costumes, but their treatment is very different. Sanvala's painting bustles along in typical mid-Akbari style, in front of a developed landscape in which colour washes are used to suggest recession. On the other hand, Kanha's more static and sumptuous style suggests the hieratic court scenes of Ahmednagar and Bijapur, while his ducking out of drawing a Mughal-type landscape likewise suggests his fairly recent arrival from the south.

15 Illuminated double-page from a manuscript of the Koran
Copied in Gwalior in 1399. This is the earliest known dated Indian manuscript of the Koran.
ff. 189b, 190; Each folio 29 x 22 cms. Collection: H. H. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Geneva, MS. 32
The *Behari* script in which it is written was developed in India during the 14th century, and was used for most Koranic manuscripts prior to the Mughal period. Typically Indian are the patterns of the polychrome floral arabesque over a black ground, and on other pages the cross-hatched ground of pink over which the text is written.

16 The opening pages of the second imperial *Akbarnama*
Commissioned about 1604
ff. 1b, 2; Folio 40.5 x 27.5 cms. British Library, London, Or. 12988
The headpiece is painted by Mansur, who specialised in this work before becoming renowned as a painter of subjects from natural history. The borders around the text are on different paper, and were added probably sometime later, but before the holograph notice by Jahangir on the recto of the first folio recording possession of the manuscript in 1619. The border paintings may indeed be as late as this, and closely resemble similar work in Jahangir's albums, in which portraits of artists, courtiers, workmen, Christian saints, Muslim ascetics, float in front of a shimmering gold landscape.

17 The blind Dhritarashtra and his wives in the hermitage of Narada in the forest
From a manuscript of the *Razmnama*, the Persian translation of the *Mahabharata* made for Akbar. This manuscript was copied in 1763 in Mordabad, but the miniatures were painted by a Murshidabad artist and bound into the volumes by Sir Elijah Impey in 1775
f. 385b; Folio 40 x 25 cms. British Library, London, Add. 5640
Impey, the Chief Justice in Calcutta, was a patron of painting in both the Murshidabad and "Company" styles. By this time, the court Murshidabad style, which flowered briefly in the 1750s and 1760s, had become more widely patronised and lost much of its original character.
In some of the paintings of this *Razmnama* there is a renewed vitality, with some very beautiful landscape and tree stylisations. Interestingly, some of the paintings are in the landscape format, echoing their predecessors 200 years before in Akbar's own copy of this work.

که تا روشنک را چو روشن چراغ
بیارند در باغ پیرایه باغ
چنین گفت با روشنک مادرش
که روشن روان شاه اسکندرش

که یاقوت یکتای اسکندری
چو همتای در شد بهم گوهری
بآیین شغل دولت پناهی کنیم
همان میری و پادشاهی کنیم

نباید سر از حکم او تافتن
که نتوان از او مهتری یافتن
کمر گر سر زلف بربندیش
که فرخ بود بر تو فرخنده کیش

چو او هر که با تو سری میزند
چو زلف تو سر بر کمر میزند
بگوش تو گر حلقه زر بود
چو نی او بود حلقه در بود



مدارای او کن که دارای ماست
چو دارا دلش در مدارای ماست
پذیرفت از او دختر دلنواز
پذیرفتنی تخت با شرم و ناز

پری زاده را زیب بزم شاه
نشاندند در مهد زرین چو ماه
بخلوتگه خسروش تاختند
ز نظارگان پرده پرداختند

پس آنگه که شد پیشکشها نغز
که بینند کانرا بر افروخت مغز
سبک مادر مهربان زان سپرد
گرامی صدف را بدریا سپرد

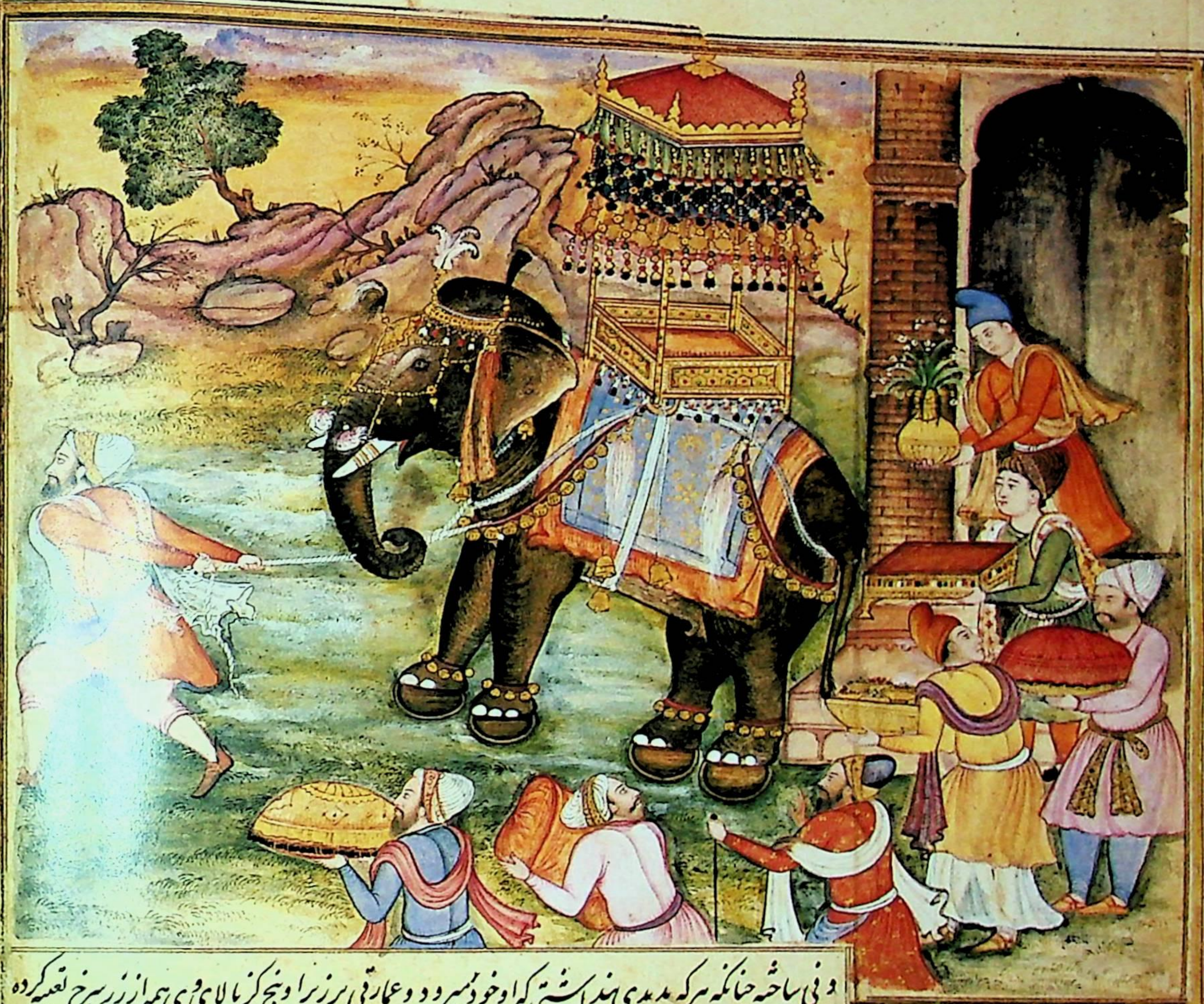
کز آن تخم شاهان گردنکشان
همین یک سهی سرو مانده نشان
بر آدم گرامی تری گوهری
سپردم بنامی ترین شوهری

بآن سیب چهران مردم فریب   همی کرد بازی چو مردم بتیب
نخستین حدیثی که آمد فرود   ز شه داد پوشید کانرا درود
که مشکوی شه را ز شه نور باد   دویی از میان شما دور باد
شه از جملهٔ آن زبانها که رفت   گناهی ندارد ازانها که رفت
امیدم چنان شد سرانجام کار   که نومید ازو گرد دامیدوار
باقبال این خانه رای آورد   خداوندی خود بجای آورد
بفرمان دارا و فرهنگ خویش   نهد شغل پیوند را پای پیش
اگر چرخ گردون خطایی نمود   باین خانه دوست ازمایی نمود
جهان پادشا را چنین است کام   بعصمت سرای چنین نیکنام
که روشن شود روی چون عاج او   شود روشنک درة التاج او
بروشن رخش چشم روشن کند   بدان سرخ گل خانه گلشن کند
ردا را چنین در پذیرفت عهد   بمه بردن [illegible] فرستاد مهد
جهاندار کاینجا غناز تازه کرد   غنای این شغل را ساز کرد
زبان را نگهداشت زین گفت و گوی   بپای [illegible] پرست [illegible]
پری روی را سوی مهد آورید   بترتیب این کار جهد آورید
چنین گفت با رای زرترجمان   که در [illegible] شاه [illegible]
کس زخانه هم خانه زادی شود   بیاد آمده هم بیادی شود
بآب زر این نکته باید نوشت   شتر باد [illegible] آ [illegible] یند کشت
بکر گوشهٔ مهد او تاج ماست   زمین بوس او مهد معراج ماست
اگر پرده گیر دسر افکنده ایم   و گر [illegible] ساز بنده ایم
ز فرمان او سر نشاید کشید   کجا رای او هست زرین کلید
اگر سر درآرد در این شغل شاه   سر روشن [illegible] ماه
بکابین خسرو رضا داده ایم   که از تخمهٔ خسروان زاده ایم
بروزی که فرمان دهد شهریار   که پیوند [illegible] شد آن اختیار
بدرگاه خسرو خرامش کنیم   بآیین پرستش رامش کنیم
چو دستور فرزانه پاسخ شنید   سوی شاه شد بازگفت آنچ دید
رخ شه برافروخت از خرمی   که صید جوابی خوش است آدمی
جوابی که در گوش گرد آورد   نیوشنده را دل بدید آورد
بروزی که طالع تنومند بود   نظرها سزاوار پیوند بود
جهانجوی بر رسم آبای خویش   پری زاده را کرد همتای خویش
برسم کیان نیز پیمان گرفت   وفا در دل و مهر در جان گرفت
دران بیعت از بهر تمکین او   بملک عجم بست کابین او
بفرمود تا کاردار از دهر   در آرایش آرند بازار و شهر
بمنسوج خوارزم و دیبای روم   مطرا کنند آن همه مرز و بوم
سپاهان بدانسان که می خواستند   بدیبا و گوهر بیاراستند
کشیدند بر طرف کوی و بام   شقایق نمطهای بیجاده فام
علمها بکردون برافراختند   جهان را نو آرایشی ساختند
بر از کله شد کوی و بازارها   دگرگونه شد شکل کارها
نشاندند مطرب بهر برزنی   اغانی سرایی و بربط زنی
شکر زیر آن عود افروختند   عدو را چو عود و شکر سوختند
زخوزان طرف تا لب زنده رود   زمین زنده گشت از نوازش سرود
ز لب رود خیزان که از می رسید   لب رامشان زرود را می گزید
گلاب سپاها ز روم شکل طراز   سر نافه و شیشه را کرد باز
شفق سرخ بر بست بر سور شاه   طبق بر شکر کرد خورشید و ماه
سپهر از شکر کوشکی ساخته   ز گل گنبدی دیگر افراخته
همه بوم و کشور ز شادی بجوش   مغنی برآورده هر سو خروش
چو شب جلوه کرد از بر ند سیاه   رخ و زلف آراسته از مشک و ماه
صدف بود گفتی مگر با بچرخ   درو غالیه سوز عطار گرخ
ز مهر شه آن ماه مشکین کمند   ز چشم و دهن ساخت بادام و قند
فرستاد هر دو بمشکوی شاه   که در خورد مشکو بود مشک و ماه
دگر روز چون آفتاب بلند   عروسانه سر برکشید از بلند
دل شاه روم از پی آن عروس   بشورش درافتاد چون زلف روس
یکی مجلس آراست از رود و می   که مینو ز شرمش برآورد خوی
بی لهو میکرد با مهتران   سر و پا غرش هر دو از نیکوان
ببخشید چندان دراز روز گنج   که از بخشش آمد خزینه برنج
چو شب عطر خورشید بر هم شکست   عقیقی در آمد شفق را ببست
به پرهیز بوسها قیلش داد   سخن بین که در بوسها قاز ناد
ملک یافت برکام دل دسترس   بمشکوی مشکین فرستاد کس



۱۲۰ عمل کانها

وطمروسیه بر زبر سر او بایستاد قبای دیبا پوشیده و کلاهی بسر نهاده و تیغ حمایل کرده و بر نقالیس
برکرسی و خرنطینوس همچنان شلشلیون را باز داوند تا در آمد چون پیش تخت رسید مر نقالیس را بدید
بشناخت که یکسال قرین او بود و یکسال بود تا او برقه بود چون در آمد چهار جای خدمت کرد و نامه
پیش داراب نهاد و مرد و چشمش در مر نقالیس مانده بود که او اینجا چگونه افتاده است اما مولف اخبار
وگذارنده اسرار ابوطاهر طرسوسی چنین روایت میکند که چون شلشلیون نامه بداراب داد
اول نامه نوشته بود که بسم الله الملک الحق المبین اما بعد نامه توکه دارابی بدین جزیره آمدی تر چنین
گمان خیال بسته است که مگر این جزیره چون جزیرهای دیگرست و ما چون کسیان دیگریم این هوس از دل
بیرون کن که این هوس فاسد است و اندرین حصار صد هزار مرد شمشیر زنست واگر صد سال ترا
زندگانی بود و تو بر در این حصار بنشینی بجز دیواری که از بیرونست دیگر ترا هیچ چیز بهره نیست
این اندک مایه چیزی فرستادیم بستان و برخیز و همچنان که آمدی برو و اگر نی من ازین حصار لشکر بیرون آرم



دنی ساخته چنانکه هرکه بدیدی پنداشتی که او خود میرود و عماریی بر زبر او پنج گز بالای وی همه از زر سرخ تعبیه کرده
بر صفت سرگاوی و چشم وی از پیروزه الماسی و بیحد جواهر و مروارید از آن عماری آویخته و چهار بالشی در میان
عماری نهاده و تاجی از بر وی آویخته و دو نرگس دان دو تن برداشته در هر یکی شاخی مرجان نهاده به بالای پنج گز
بر سان درختی و هر مرواریدی در وی آویخته چند بیضه کبوتری و تختی زرین ده تن گرفته می آوردند و بیست استر و بیست
ساخت می آوردند و ده غلام شتلیون از حصار بیرون آورد داراب را خبر کرده اند که رسولان آمده اند
از نزدیک فصطلیقون گفت بیارید شان در حال رسول را در آوردند داراب نشسته بود و شراب میخورد
جا جان رسول را در آوردند داراب و خرلطینوس و هرنقالیس و طمروسیه هر چهار نشستند و تدبیر کردند
داراب گفت این حصار را چگونه گیریم طمروسیه گفت هر چه من بگویم آن کن تا حصار ترا گردد گفت بگوی گفت
این مرد عم منست مرا نشناسد که دیر است که مرا ندیده است تدبیر آنست که فردا مرا جامه مردان پوشانی و تو که
دارابی مرا بر زبر سر خود جای ده تا بایستم چنانکه جانداران بایستند تا عمم بیاید مرا ببیند بر بالای سر تو چون او مرا دید و دانست که
من جاندارم مرا با خرلطینوس رسولی فرست تا من روم و چنان کنم این حصار را بتو دهند داراب گفت ای طمروسیه نباید که ترا
بدانند طمروسیه گفت ندانند داراب گفت مگر تو بهانه میکنی تا نزدیک مادر و پدر شوی و باز نیایی طمروسیه گفت هرگز این نباشد اگر
این خواستمی کردمی هرگز بتو نزدیک نیامدمی داراب گفت روا بود و چون آن شب بر ایشان بگذشت روز دیگر داراب بر تخت نشست

عمل سانوله ۱۱۹

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الحادي عشر

عملكم ورسوله ثم

تردون إلى عالم

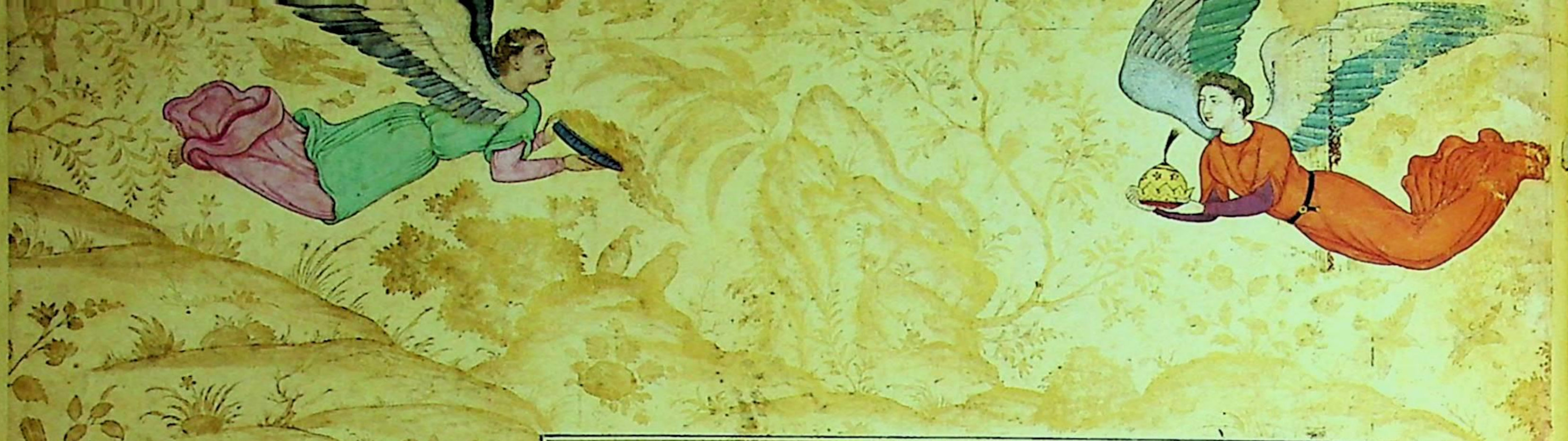
الغيب والشهادة فينبئكم

بما كنتم تعملون سيحلفون

بالله لكم إذا انقلبتم

الثلاثون


الجزء
يعتذرون اليكم اذا
رجعتم اليهم قل
لا تعتذروا لن نؤمن
لكم قد نبأنا الله من
اخباركم وسيرى الله





پیرفرازی و هم انجام را پیرایهٔ دلنوازی هم قافله سالار سخنوران و هم شهریار سخنوری چراغ کلبهٔ تاریک نشینان
انیس وحدت پیرای خلوت گزینان درد افزای باطن مشتاقان کوی خداجویی مرهم نه ناسور خسته درونان
کنج ناشکیبایی نوش داروی شورابه نوشان اشک حسرت مومیای شکسته دلان زاویهٔ خاموشی
آرای دلاوران هنگامهٔ عشق بزم افروز معشوق مزاجان بارگاه اطمینان تشنه لبان دریافت را آتش استسقا بخش
دلان بادیهٔ جویایی را جوع افزا از اینجاست که خردپروران بیدار دل با همه سراسیمگی شوق و بی آرامی
ت فکرت از دامن موج کبریا کوتاه دانسته تشنه لب و آبله پای هزاران جوش و خروش فرو خورده
بر لب نهاده اند و بدستیاری انصاف پای ادب در دامن عجز پیچیده در آنچه شایانی آن از عطیه
یزدانی باشند شروع نکرده   راه کمال ز احرف و نقط ریگ دشت   عالم علم ز شهر سخن و سنا
دست اندیشه را شحنهٔ غیرت زند   لطمهٔ حیرت بروی سیلی جهل اقفا   یعنی سپاس ایزد چون از احاطه
امکان بیرون است و ستایش خداوند متعال از احصای اکوان افزون   حدیث آنجا که از یزدان شناسیست
سپاس اندیشی ما پیداست   تو جرأت بین که همت میزند جوش   که گیرد قطره دریا را در آغوش
نپنداری که حرفش در کتابست   کزین حرف گمان ما تنها پیست   سخن را چند باشد محمل آرای
بدیست او بر عجز آنجا نه پایی   هرگاه زمینیان را با آسمانیان رابطهٔ مناسبت مفقود و خاکیان را با افلاکیان
راه سخن مسدود باشد مکانیان را بلامکانیان چه نسبت خواهد بود تا حصهٔ من ذرهٔ خاک نشین با نسبت آفتاب
عالمتاب قدس چه باشد محبوس مطمورهٔ امکان و حدوث را بادیه پیمایی عرصهٔ وجوب و قدم چه حد و
کدام یارا ذرهٔ سرگشتهٔ بی سر و پا را در شعشعهٔ نیر جهان افروز بجز هواداری چه بهره و قطرهٔ شبنم را با بحر خار را
مدار بجز لاف خشک چه نصیبه   هیهات اگر ذره از آن فروغ بخش انجمن هستی گوید اگرچه او را نمی شناسد
و او را نیکو میداند اما از او نیکو میداند و او را می جوید لیکن تنگنای ظلمت را با ساحت نور چه نسبت و عدم مطلق را با وجود بحت
چه مناسبت آفرین هرگاه آفرین کامیاب شناسایی شو آشد تا دمی چند در هوای ثنای بدایع مکنونات
او زند یا قدمی چند در صحرای ادراک عجایب مخزونات او نهند او را در معرض ستایش آفریدگار در آمدن چگونه سزد
بارتا بانغه را از خلوت سرای سلطانی سخن گفتن خود را در مضحکهٔ ایام انداختن و سخرهٔ هنگامهٔ عوام ساختن است
پای سخن را که درازست دست   سنگ سراپردهٔ او بشکست   گرچه سخن فربه و جان پرورست





الله اکبر این چه دریافت ژرف و شناختی شگرف که حقیقت پذیران دقیقه رس و روشن ضمیران تیزبین
چنان جدول آفرینش و پرکارکشایان لوحهٔ دانش و بینشند در ترکیب عنصری و پیکر هیولانی نقدی گرانمایه و گوهری والا
طبع که در کالبد قیمت نگنجد و میزان قیاس بر نسنجد و مکیال گفت در نیاید و از مقیاس اندیشه بیرون باشد غیر از سخن
که نسبت متحرک و هوایی متموج نیافته اند و چرا چنین نباشد که پیرانجام دارالملک معنی بی دستیاری آن امکان نپذیرد
و معموری خراب آباد صورت بی مددکاری آن در اندیشه نگذرد شعر این چه سخن بود که شد آشکار

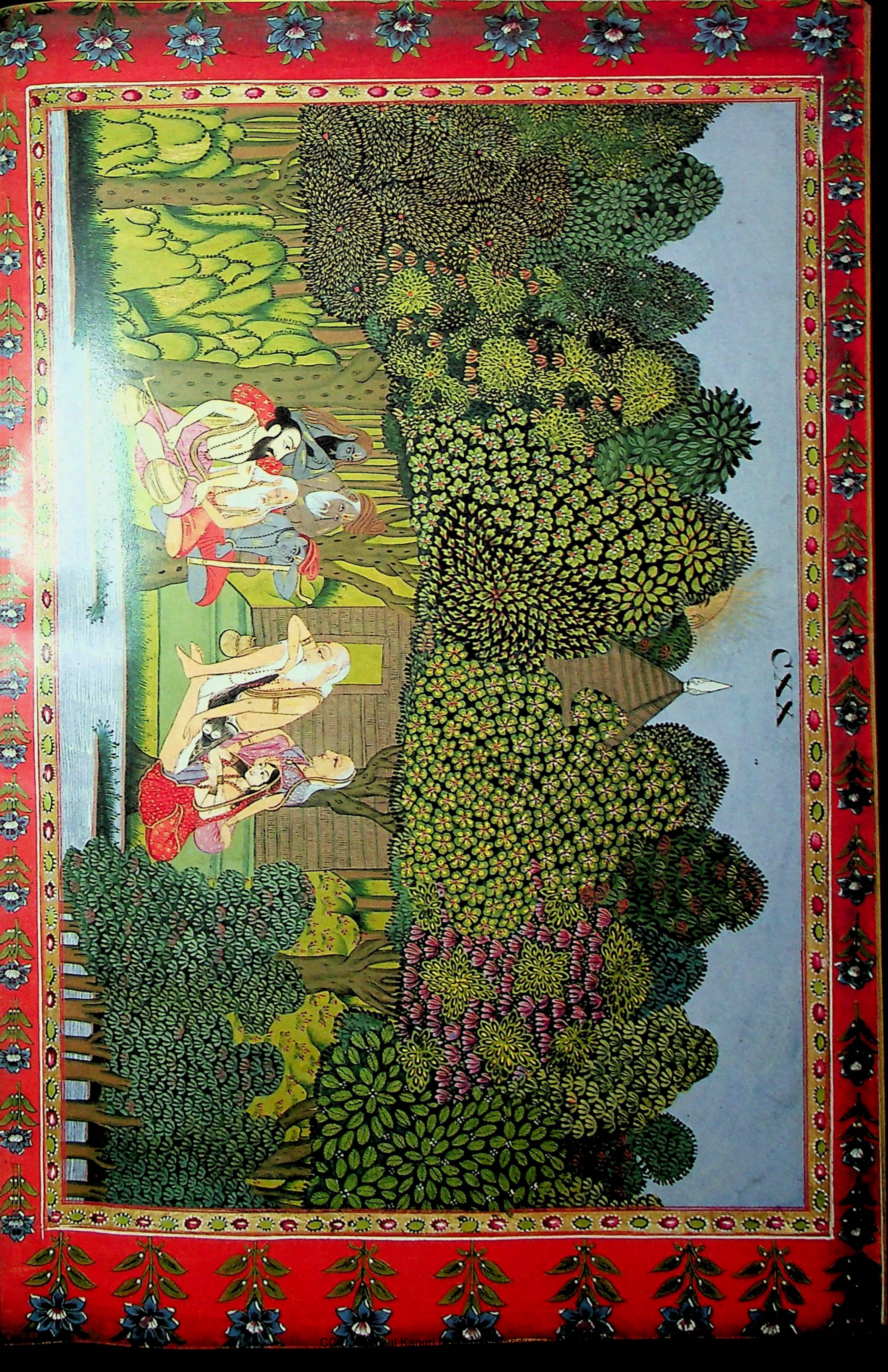
پرده برانداخت ز نشر دو هزار	نیست درین بزم پرستیش	نیست حریفی ز بر دستیش
کارکشا اوست درین کارگاه	صدرنشین اوست درین بارگاه	هرچه درآمد بدل اهل هوش
دل ز زبان گفت و زبان دیگوش	از در دل هم مدد دل رهش	ناطقه و سامعه جولانگهش
ما و سخن را بر صد کاه و هوش	مشرق و مغرب ز زبانست و گوش	چنانچه پایه والای او برتر دبان

آسمان هوان رسید پای ما و پیمائی خرد در پیدای ناپیدای طبعیت او قدم نتوان زد آتش مزاجیست
خاکی طبیعتی است آب نما منبعش آتشکدهٔ دل اوج پروازش نشیمنگاه هوا گرمی بازارش با آب آرامگاهش
صفحهٔ خاک مرتبه شناسان صفوف عزت فراخور دیده و دریافت خود چنانچه سپهسالار انجمن معنی بل خلیفه
دل دانشمند موبد موبدان دانش الشکن خاطر ابوالا ضمیر اکاشند خاصه سخنی که فهرست نسخهٔ مفاخر
و زینت مجموعهٔ معالی باشد یعنی مدح که خدای آسمان و زمین و حمد دادار جان و تن آفرین هم آغاز یادی





ایشان را بجای خود برد و باهم می بودند و همه پوست آهو و دیگر
جانوران را پوشیده و دیگر لباسهای را دور کرده و اکثر اوقات
لفافه می بودند و چندان ریاضت کشیدند که بغیر از پوست
و استخوان هیچ گوشت در بدن ایشان نمانده بود و کهیشران
و منیشران بزرگ که دران نواحی بودند چون نارد و دربیت
و دیول و شکاچایج و غیر اسم چون شنیدند که دهتراشت
ترک [illegible] از جای خود و بدیدن دهتراشت آمدند
و همه [illegible] کاندهاری و کنتی را دیدند و ایشان را
تسلی [illegible] نهادند و تمام خدمت دهتراشت
و کاندهاری [illegible] میکرد و ایشان کنتی را دعا خیر میکردند
و بیاس اکثر اوقات بدیدن ایشان می آید سخنان رکهیشران
و عابدان گذشته و پیش پیشینان را حکایت میکرد و ایشان را
مشغول میداشت و دیگر رکهیشران هم حکایت صالحان
که پیش از ایشان گذشته بودند و سلاطین که ترک دنیا کرده
بودند و از طاعت و عبادت مراتب عالی در انجهان که
یافته بودند با ایشان میگفتند چندانکه ایشان را تمام غم
دنیا و کشته شدن فرزندان و خویشان بدر آوردند و نارد
اینحکایت با ایشان میگفت که راجه بود سرحیت نام و
او از اجداد همین ست جوت بود و چون پیر شد ترک بادشاهی
کرده حواله پسر خود نموده و خود باین جنگل آمده همین جا که
شما عبادت میکنید او عبادت میکرد لعد از ریاضت
بسیار وفات یافت و بجای ایندر رفت و نارد هر چیزی را


CXX

aditi

A View Point

Joy in the doing implies a creative process. The joy of love, of a mother raising her child, of a crop well reaped, of the sun rising, of a craftsman handling his craft — how are these related?

To watch something body itself out of nothing — this is joy. To play our part with dignity in a process that goes out to others — this is joy.

Out of darkness, daily, comes the sun; out of labour, seasonal ripening. Out of grass, clay, wood or bronze comes a toy or a ritual object. Out of a moment's secret happiness comes a new human being.

A sense of the forces that inform life from birth to birth inspires Indian craft activity at its finest. Can such crafts survive without the supportiveness of older cultural traditions? Can these craftsmen adapt their skills to meet the changing demands now made of them?

The exhibition "Aditi" attempted to put together a simple display on the child and the cycle of life as an inspiration for handicrafts in India.

It was conceived in several sections, each concerned with a different aspect of the life cycle. The chosen theme unfolds the pattern of this culture that we call Indian. It is an integral pattern. Making, being and expressing are the same things. So that the reason, or the specific occasion, is an event on which its own artefact, related functional skill, supportive traditions or ritual memory converge.

"Aditi's" theme itself was simple. It was Life; that joy is best expressed through the desire for new life; that life expresses itself as an expansion of a seed into the ongoing spiral of experience.

"Aditi" traced the cycle of time itself from the abundant desire for life (and that which precedes desire) to the point when life again furthers life, spinning off into yet another cycle.

"The cycle contracts itself into the child. No individual or community as a whole reveals its nature and its essential values as in its relation to its children. For the child is the repository of our collective experiences, our hopes and the imbalances of what we conceive the ideal man or ideal woman to be. Our child then is both child and adult in capsule."

"Aditi" presents what it has to say by drawing on a cluster of fundamentally Indian metaphors.

"*Yat pinde tatso Brahmande*" — "In microcosm lies the macrocosm"; the potter is also called "*prajapat*", the progenitor. His equipment and action is symbolical of the cosmic forces of creation. The wheel is Vishnu's *chakra,* the eternal law according to which everything proceeds into manifestation and is again withdrawn from it; the stick is Indra's bolt; the flat cone is Shiva's *linga;* and the water-container is the *kunda* of Brahma (cf. *Chaak Puja* required to solemnise weddings in North India). The pot is also a form of the goddess in some parts of India, as of the human body in Kabir's *doha.* It comes into its own when finally separated from the spinning mound of clay with the thread — the ritual thread of initiation — *Janayu Pavit.*

When viewed as a whole, India is bewilderingly diverse. Varied traditions merge or influence each other: the rural and tribal vernacular traditions on one side, and the unbroken classical tradition on the other. Micro-communities of itinerants and migrants, forced to move with the imperative of employment, and the tales and songs of itinerant bards and performers have helped to unify this divergent whole.

"Aditi" observes rituals as an attempt of man to control a mysterious environment and render it tangible through composite symbols, images, sounds and gestures. It also explains their significance as events that foster inter-personal and community relationships and customs. "Aditi", wherever possible, also observes the changes in them as age-old respect breaks down into a new contemporary understanding.

Most of what "Aditi" presents is still part of live tradition in India, or that which is within easy recall. The task is to strengthen the roots while accepting the choice of change.

Pria Devi and Rajeev Sethi



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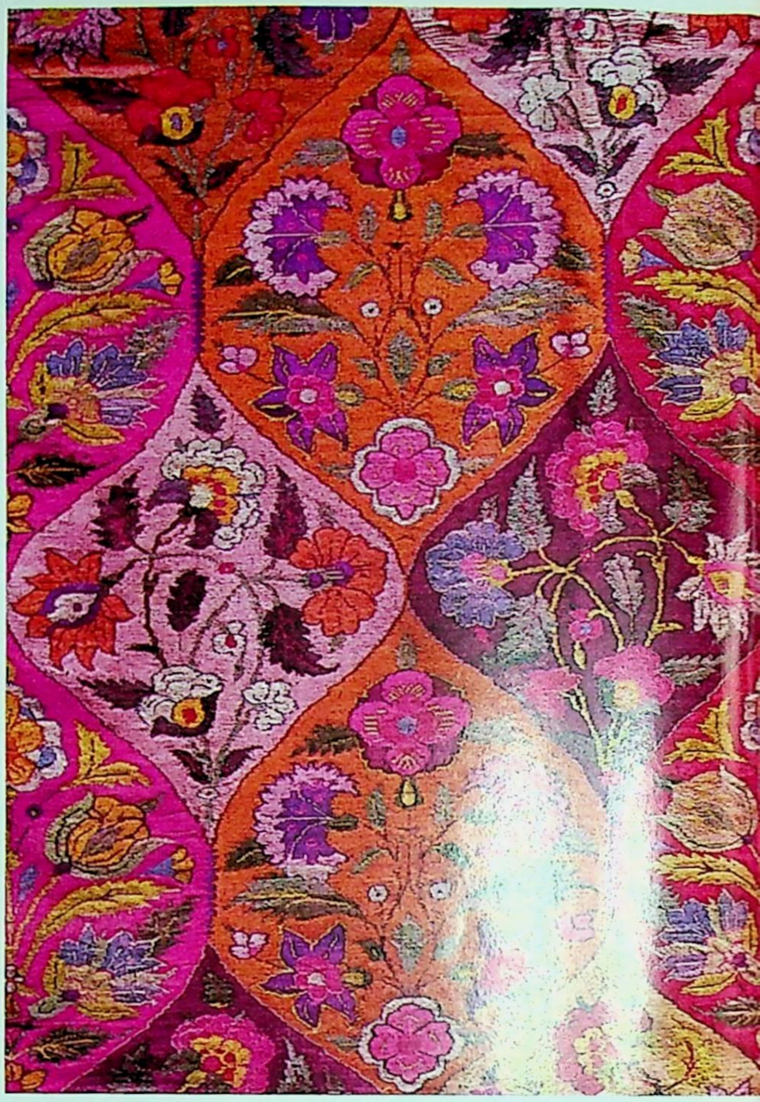
1 Earth Goddess
1500 B.C. Madhya Pradesh

2 Shiva, Parvati and Kartikeya
Craftswoman: Bindeshwari; Contemporary, Mithila, Bihar; Corn husk and wire; 33 x 20 cms.
HHEC, New Delhi





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3 Shiva *Linga*
Contemporary, Tamil Nadu
Bronze; 28 x 27 x 20 cms.
AIHB Crafts Museum, New Delhi

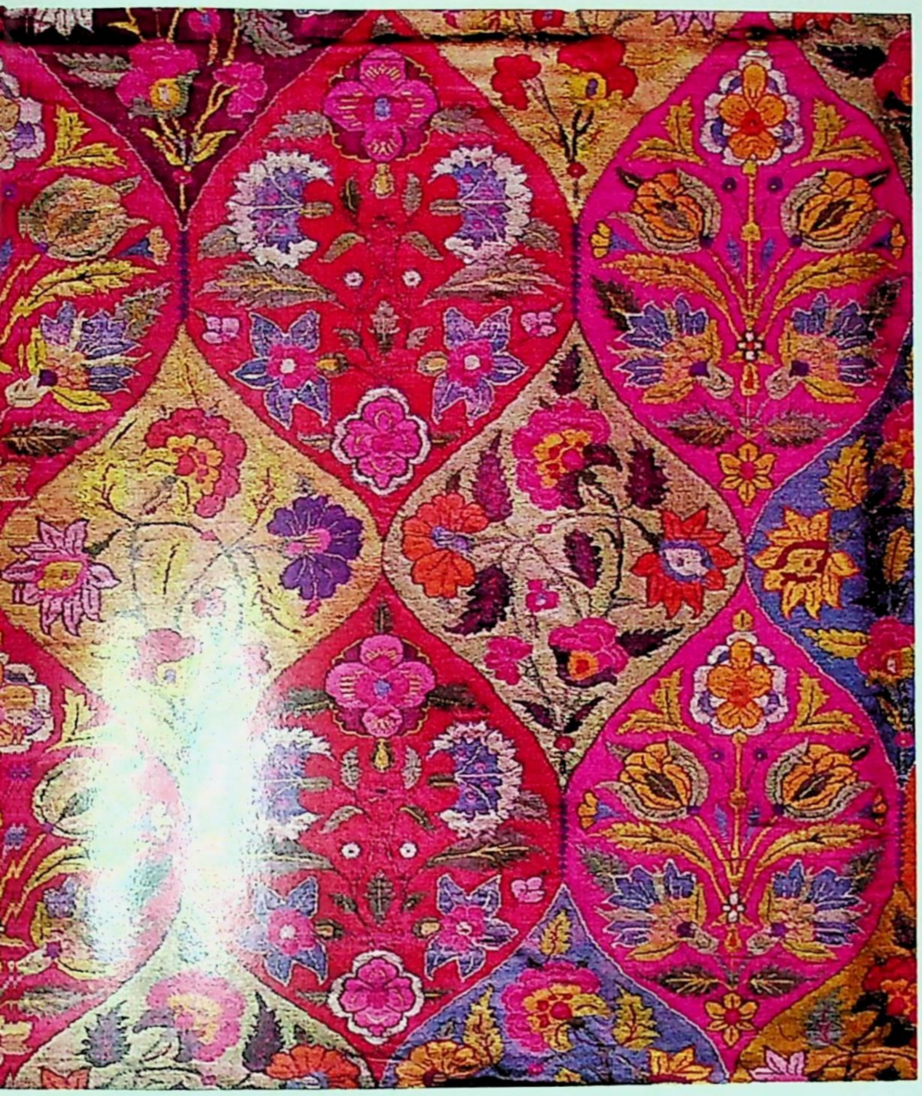
4 Wedding Chest
Contemporary, Orissa
Wood painted; 51 x 30 cms.
AIHB Crafts Museum, New Delhi

5 Jamewar *doshala* (shawl)
Late Mughal, Kashmir
Pashmina wool; 380 x 135 cms.
Collection: C.L. Bharany, New Delhi

6 *Pido* head veil
Contemporary, Rajasthan
Cotton tie-dye; 248 x 183 cms.
AIHB Crafts Museum, New Delhi

7 Yashodha and Krishna
19th century, Karnataka
Wood and polychrome; 23 x 17 cms.
Chitrakala Parishad, Bangalore

8 Toy horse
Contemporary, Rajasthan
Wood and polychrome; 74 x 57 x 23 cms.
AIHB Crafts Museum, New Delhi



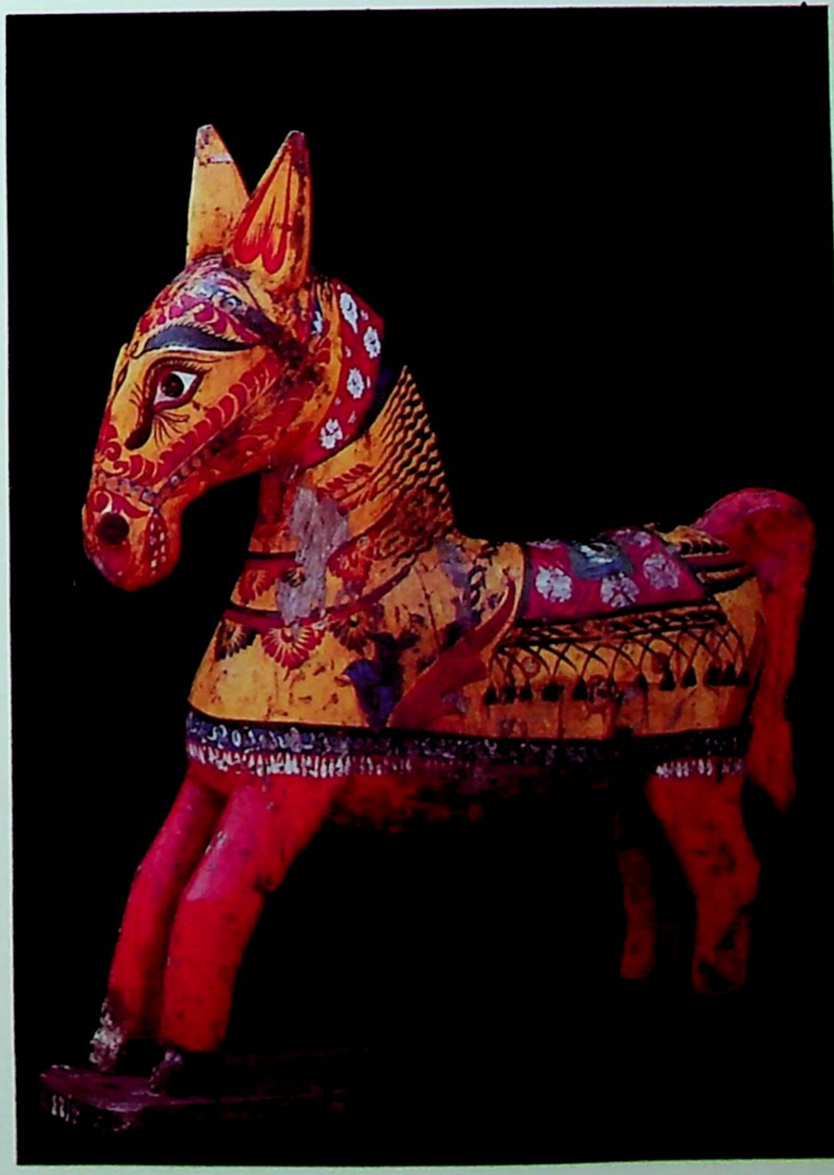
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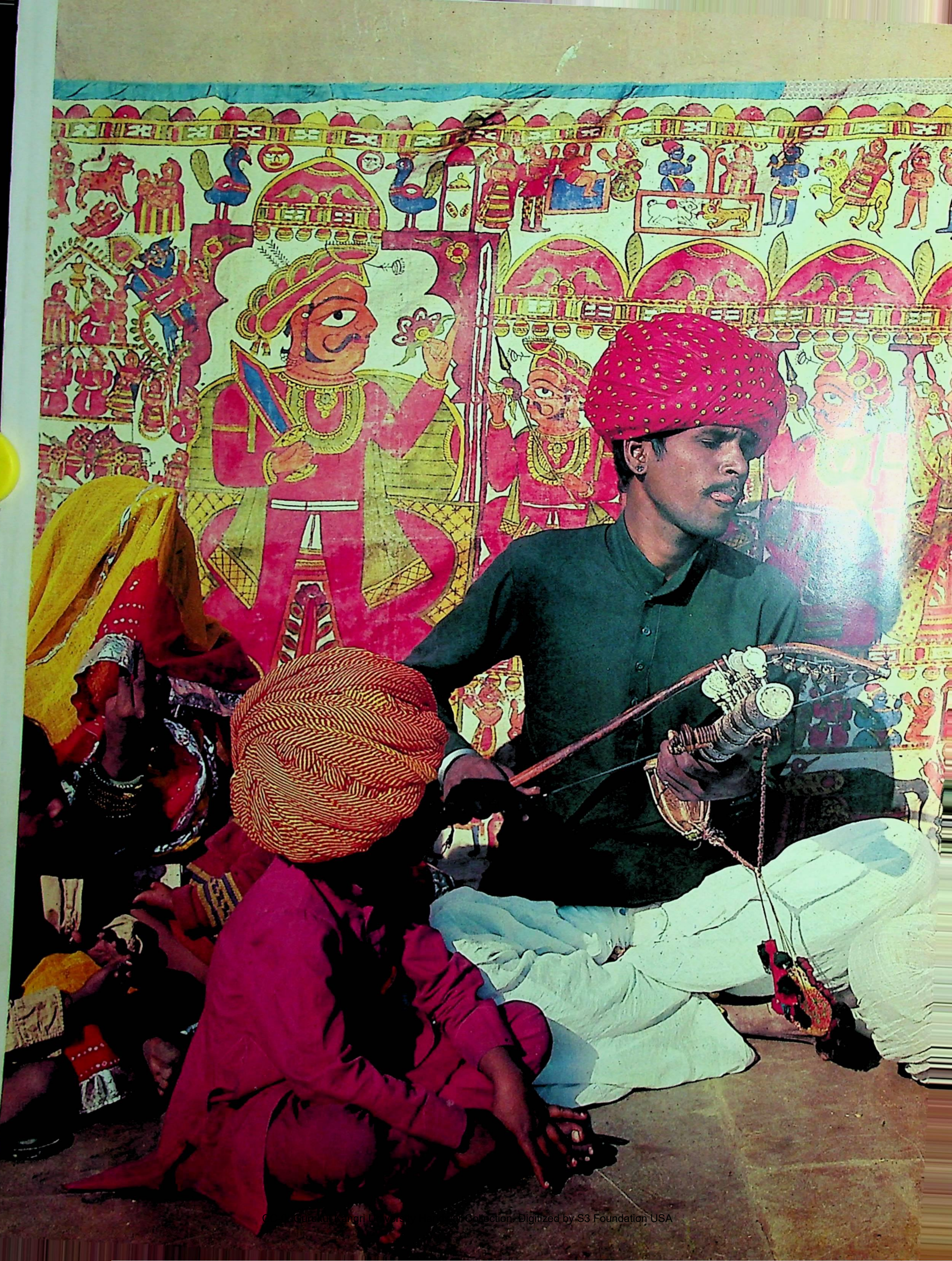
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An Introduction to "Aditi"

Exhibitions come and go. The inner dynamic of this country is far more elusive. Men and women go about their way of life and work, transacting, celebrating, worshipping, knotting together at family gatherings. They dream their private and collective dreams. They change imperceptibly from day to day as patterns shift.

"Aditi" attempted to catch something of the quality of these people through the quality of what they have made at their finest and what they enjoy. All life speaks through the first person.

The seeds of the 1982 exhibition were sown somewhat earlier in the Year of the Child. From the Indian child to its significance in traditional society followed naturally; he or she is awaited long before a sense of specific individuation sets in. The child, ideally, signifies renewal. The family tree fruits; vital energies of the clan recirculate; the ancestors are satisfied. The spiral unwinds. We found this to be the paradigm for most traditional societies.

But in this curve we found ourselves watching something unexpectedly inclusive. For here is a complete nexus of response and relationship, social recognitions and cultural signalling. Here, the reinforcing rhythm of ritual from fertility *vratas* and Hindu *samskaras* to seasonal celebration and major rites of passage. Each tradition has its equivalents.

This expresses itself in craft activity, be it the ritual art of symbolic purity, the low-cost ingenuity of a vernacular design-sense or the *tour de force* of *haveli* and *darbar.* It deepens to questions of creativity in the traditional world-view; to seasons and to cropping-patterns, for instance; to sung-spoken traditions of the people, their myths, legends and signalling systems; to astrological time on the other hand and to questions of origin and creation-theory.

Since this is what separates the accretive world-view of the classical Indian model from urban nuclear living with its alternative choices, it provides the interface from which to view culture in transition, urban migration and the influence of urban living on satellite towns and villages. By 1982, however, "Aditi" decided to present these several focuses side by side and without overt comment. This might seem to indicate an attempt by the designers/organisers to view intrinsic symmetries holistically. It is implicit in the decision to draw on the additional resource of museum collections.

The question of origin is a primaeval concern, the idea of celebration perennial. While the twentieth century may seek to imitate or reduplicate these, traditional societies have the special gift of directly recycling and thereby conserving, symbolic clusters of meaning. The evidences are multiple and readily perceptible: not only in the material of sacral art but also in the usages, techniques and social rituals of day-to-day living.

The traditional Indian streamlining of form to function (that everywhere characterises the classic design-sense at its finest) is intimately bonded into a symbolic language.

"Aditi" attempted to present this live.

It must have been somewhere between 100 B.C. and A.D. 200 that Bharata embarked on the *Natya-Shastra*[1]. From where does *rasa* arise (this essence, juice, sap, elixir of living, this fluid pulse that pushes life outward from within)?

"Just as a tree from a seed, the flowers from the tree and fruit from the flowers; so are the essences at the root, and from them all emotions spring."

It is as though we were watching a continual cycling of energy, from the first signs of germination, up the tense stem, this energy swelling the bud, exploding it and contracting itself into the new germ—it is in this way, that the *rasas* (he counts nine of them), spin out of themselves the emotional states. And from these emotions in their turn arise the essences.

If each part of the whole is dependent on, and causally related to the other in the distillation of the creative act which we perceive through the aesthetic experience, how much more so in life? The root-meaning of *rasa* as vital fluid circling, nourishing, feeding life and throwing up new forms carries us backwards to the ancient curiosity about creation. And to the celebration of life-forces.

Meanwhile, "Aditi" traces one complete life-cycle; it does not tract the individual from birth to death, but slices across a spiral from the coming of age of one generation to the coming of age of the next. To section through a collective experience frees us to notice the traditional cluster of relationships to be found on this curve.

In the lateral spread from village to village "dialect changes every few miles like the flavour of the water," to crest in twenty-six linguistic areas, and the great religions are also communities whose attitudes concretise in details of household ways. The sub-cultures of the tribals are perhaps the most indigenous of us all, while within Hinduism itself there is a vertical stratification of inherited occupations and socio-economic groupings. These can be regarded almost as micro-cultures.

The alertness of clay offering and that of a ritual bronze differ not simply in the material used: the one will be spontaneous, rugged and immediate; the other is subject to iconographic rules. Nevertheless there is something vitally in common. When craft is withdrawn from its context it becomes an "object". Released into its own environment it becomes a process of living.[2] Each was made for a specific purpose. In fulfilling the purpose for which it was made, it excellently expressed, instinctively, emotionally or with hieratic consciousness, the formal or perceptual values of the people who made it and used it.

Home and Pattern of Convergence

The family is home. It is also our first paradigm for society. The traditional archetype reveals, by its balances, difference to age and experience. Objectively, the Hindu *kula* may be considered a self-governing and autonomous unit that is related to the community primarily by lineage, but also by its "connections" and by the achievements of its individual members. It is a rooted community.

For the Hindu, the state of the "Householder" is the second in the four stages of life.[3] According to Manu the law-giver it is marriage, the twelfth and final *samskara* or "right performance"[4] that initiates us as collaborators into this experience.

For itinerant performers, on the other hand, strolling players and wandering smiths, such as the *Gadi-lohars* of Chittorgarh, home, as they put it, is simply wherever you set up the three stones over which you cook.

Yet, whether it be the ancestral domus or a cart moving down a road, most traditional Indians will agree that the family is one's psychic centre and one's first loyalty. The home from which one came, one in return sustains. And here the mysteries of life are performed. It is for this reason that "Aditi" chose to locate its significance within the family.

The collective of the family-community bred an inbuilt sense of privacy; the individual learned early the art of adjustment and the fine art of the unspoken. In contrast to this personal reticence and non-verbal signalling system, vernacular songs from all over the country are freighted with exuberant sexual allusion, where family roles themselves are referred to wryly or with robust irony.

Through marriage families transact and consolidate mercantile or geneological bonds. The orthodox *kula* retains a sense of *gotra*, clan, and *jati*, sub-caste, within the *varna*. The ancestors are involved; likewise, ensuing generations. The issue of astrological compatibility leads naturally to finer abstractions where, at the moment of ritual conjunctions, any brief intrusion of individualism melts away. The traditional ideal of marriage taps the deepest psychic levels.

9 ***Bhopa*** (balladeer)
Rajasthan



Sarota (areca-nut cutter)
19th century, Maharashtra
Silver; 18 x 8 cms.
Kelkar Museum, Pune

Conception: the carrying of new life

The wife addresses her husband: Dear one, the time has come for you to bring me *chunris.* The little sister-in-law and eldest sister-in-law wear such *chunris.* And your Beloved almost feels a little jealous. Indeed, I am so happy now, bring me not one, but six of the same kind.

Gladly drape my mother-in-law with the first
For she gave birth to you, my love,
The second, to my sister-in-law give
Who fondled you in her lap as a child.
To my eldest sister-in-law, the third;
Who gave us for a night our very first room of love
Where we played together, turning like the *svastika*: the travelling Sun.
The fourth to my little sister-in-law,
Who gave us the couch on which we rested that same night.
The fifth, to the midwife who gives me courage
To withstand the anguished hour of labour.
And with this sixth *chunri,* my husband, drape your tender wife who gives you now continuance of your family name.

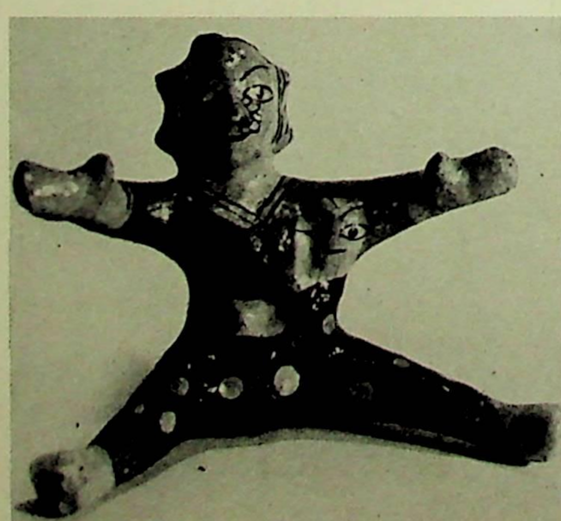


Doll
Contemporary, Warrangal, Andhra Pradesh
Wood painted; 15 x 8 cms.
AIHB Crafts Museum, New Delhi

Birth: new life appears

The men: The time we have been waiting for has come. A great wind sweeps through the young trees, bending them and shaking their fruit free. One of the household is gone to call the midwife. We men sit in the courtyard smoking, barely talking. It is the woman's time. And now the house belongs to the women, busy whispering, heating water, warming oil. The new father starts nervously as a horse at each fresh sound from the house. And we joke with him. Yes, life is in the balance, but we have been through it all before.

And now he is one of us. For the mother-in-law appears and she is smiling. And the first high cries continue like a new bird chirping... the first lamp is lit. There is laughing and congratulation. Quickly announce it with music to the village, take out the big family *karais* (heavy iron cooking vessels to be used over a slow fire). In the morning the women will set to with ghee and sugar and there will be sweets for all the neighbours.

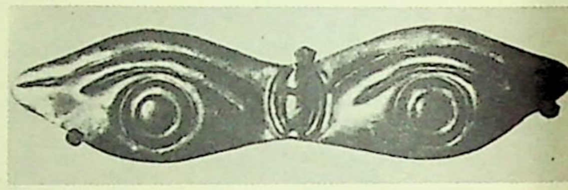


Mother and child
Contemporary, Gujarat
Cowdung painted; 15 x 11 cms.
AIHB Crafts Museum, New Delhi

Safeguarding

The women: To what kind of world has it come, the little one? For a brief space there is love and light and joy. Now it is sleeping. But we who have passed this way before know of the wolf that lurks outside the door. There is hunger and there is need. Alas, it will learn of these in time. There is the envy and the malice of the ill-disposed. For the world of men is quick to intrigue and the struggle for power. In the old days the stranger and now the daily news tells us of wars and battles beyond our knowing. The earth itself is changing, it is said. And nearer home there can yet be sickness and death. . . . The innocent have many enemies.

Let the kohl strengthen its eyes against them. Let the name of god placed next to its heart forfend it. Let this pure iron temper its spirit. And as we massage it with oils and unguents, may its limbs grows strong and straight.



A pair of eyes
19th century, Tamil Nadu
Silver; 6.5 cms.
Madras Museum

Promised World

Mother: "What shall I promise the
Little One
Who rocks in my arms?
Elephants crash in the jungle.
And the shadow-man with the bag
knocks on the door.
What shall I promise my jewel,
my little golding?
Ivory and musk and silver bells?
Rivers of milk and sweet-balls?
The camels come out of the desert.
The ships return from the sea.
What shall I promise my little jewel
in the morning?
I would wish you peace, my joy,
I would wish you your heart's desire.
I would have my husband's child dance
as a peacock before the rains.
But elephants crash in the jungle.
And the shadow-man sits and waits
by the door.
And the king's crown is toppled
on the marble floor.
And the streets are full of men
with empty hands,
My little jewel, my little lion's paw;
Grow with a full heart to love with.
Generous of mind and quick to protect.
Grow with a straight back and a wise mind,
My little emerald, my joy in the morning.

Signals of Fertility

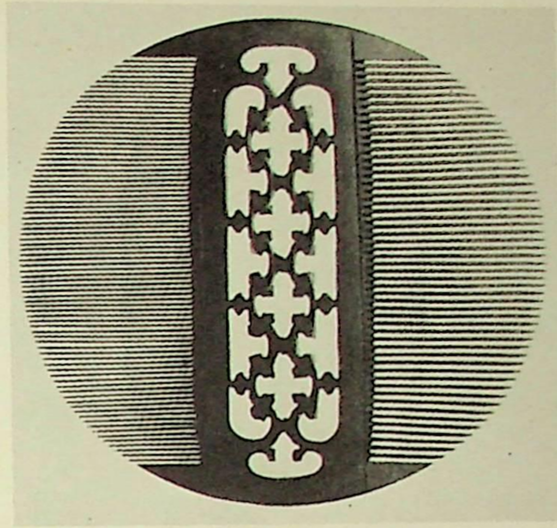
Just as the robust and earthy balance the ideal, so the sacral invests the concrete and the immediate in this country. The tree of life sends its roots down, its branches up. The quiet mysticism of the lit lamp at evening combines the burning wick with its cool cup of oil. There is the holy sign of gender itself. The goddess of plenty. The plough. The grinding stone. The fish sleeping in the waters. The turtle of longevity at the root of things. The flying parrakeet of desire. The fish and the turtle owe their symbolic potency to the fact that they inhabit the waters of life.



Guari
19th century, Rajasthan
Brass; 13 x 12 cms.
Collection: Lance Dane, Bombay

Courtship

One of the most humane and poetic systems for adolescents is the *ghotul* or communal dormitory among the Muria tribals of central India. Here post-pubertal children leave the home for the commune at the heart of the village. Here they will stay through their teens and into their early twenties, when they are old enough to set up homes of their own. They may meet their parents during the day for the *ghotul* is responsible for the cleanliness and for the hospitality of the village. In its internal dynamic it is remarkable for its emphasis on sociability, the absence of private property and the discouragement of any kind of possessiveness in relationship.



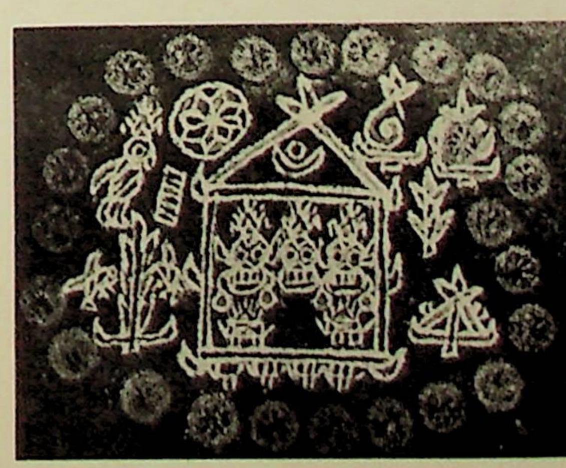
Kanghi (comb)
Contemporary, Nagina, Uttar Pradesh
Ebony; 10.25 cms. diametre
Collection: Aman Nath

Preparation for Marriage

Preparations for marriage and the nuptial chamber fill a large area in the folkways of the more usual kind of village; and what follows.

In the inner chamber meanwhile, the young girl's senses are shyly coming awake. Older women have bathed her affectionately in a cleansing golden wash of turmeric-water or sandal-paste. Her startled eyes are lined with kohl made from the soot of tender *nim*-flowers. Her slender palms and the soles of her feet, heated with expectancy, are dyed to an intricate tracery of copper-coloured leaves and tendrils with the cool juice of crushed hena.

And her hair, washed with the 'three fruits', has been dried over incense, oiled and coiled. Fresh flower-chains are being carried in by the basket: jasmine, rose and bitter-sweet fire of marigold; their scent hangs in the air. The bed is disordered with silks; each a classic, as far as possible, of its tradition. For this is her inheritance. Boxes of ancestral jewels are being uncovered. These she receives from her mother and from her grandmother. These she will wear for the first time tonight; and these tomorrow take away for daughters of her own.

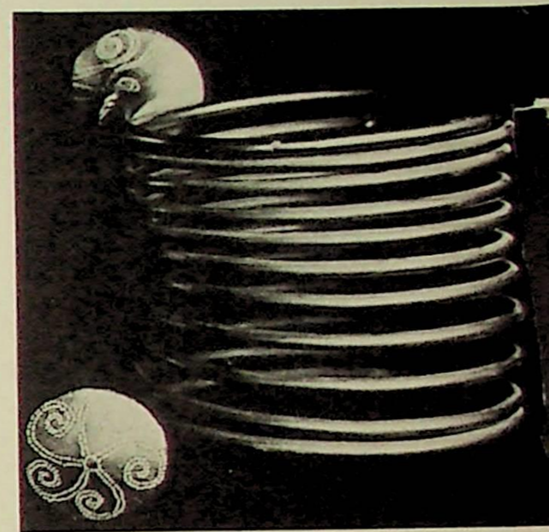


Osa **drawing**
Puri, Orissa

The Wedding

The sense of festivity spills out into ... street . . . The entire neighbourhood know... of the event . . . Women have hung up fres... mango leaves at the doorway. Auspicio... banana leaves grace the gate. The floo... have been cleanly swept and are decorate... the walls are rich with freshly pain... colours and as the bride's senses s... come awake in the inner chamber, gue... are being greeted and the priests wa...

And the conch sounds. Or the *nagasvara*... Or the *shehnai*. The groom is coming wi... his family and his friends.



Tribal bangle
Contemporary
Brass; 12.5 x 7.5 cms.
Regional Design Centre, Calcutta

Nuptial Chamber

Bride: It is prepared. They are laug... outside the window, his friends, his fa... those with whom he grew up. Now ... doors are closed. Here is the scent of sa... and of flowers. There the gods; and h... the scarlet bedspread. The oil lam... troubled. When I looked up from ... marriage fire, I saw him watching me smiling. And I changed. And now?

Groom: Tender as the sapling that I pla... in my father's garden three moons... this girl. My wife. At last we are toge... The pollen has scattered from the flo... in her hair and she is shy and hesitati... the lamp. Ah, I will raise for you s... sons and daughters, straight of limb ... laughing proudly. Come, my little ... my wife.

"... I am He," says a man to woman in front of the Fire-Witness,
"You are She.
I, the harmony;
You, the words.
I, the sky;
You, the earth.
Let us now be one.
From us let children spring."

Family and the Pattern of Expansion

Within the design of any traditional world-view the birth of a child is significant. Sons inherit the family skills, maintain the way of their fathers and honour the household gods. Hindu sons and grandsons see to the rites of the pyre. Daughters extend the influence of the family. The moment of birth is noted, the skyscape scanned and charted.

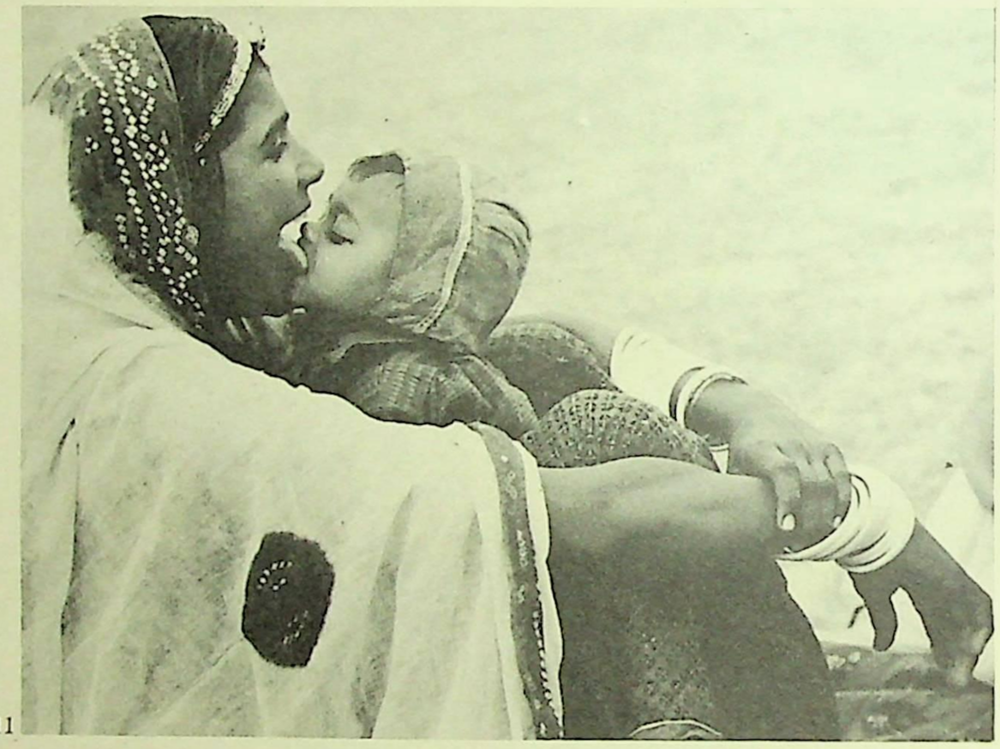
Much of the jubilation that accompanies the successful birth comes from relief, just as celebration and thanksgiving follow a successful harvest. Ritual has so arranged it that the mother has the time and privacy to surface into sensuous physicality with her baby after the ordeal and before resuming her share of household responsibilities. The days of "impurity" are sacred days. Bathing the baby, massaging it on one's knees, suckling it, dreaming to oneself in the long, still Indian afternoons—this is the stuff of infancy. To every mother the nativity of her child is the Nativity; he is her Krishna, a thing of wonder.

Though child-rearing patterns vary from community to community, it is generally allowed that the early years of play and curiosity are to be the years of maximal physical freedom. Responsibilities make themselves felt in proportion to the child's capacity to take note of them. In a traditional society adults are unusually spontaneous in their physical relationship with children; the child grows up interacting with perhaps two, even three, generations of the family simultaneously.

If the child finds himself within a protected world of many people, it follows that his social sense develops early. This is initially conveyed by an understanding of private and public space. The kitchen or the bedroom are the places to find one's mother. The family courtyard is the place to play. One is quiet around the shrine and around elders. The traditional Indian child is, all considered, rarely alone.



10



11



12

10 Grandmother adorning the bride with jewellery

11 The joy of motherhood

12 Snake-charmer

13 Devi — Village Goddess
Early 18th century, Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu
Bronze; 31 x 10.5 cms.
Collection: Lance Dane, Bombay

14 A young boy learns from a Rajasthani *phad* painter





Headgear (folk)
Contemporary, Darbhanga, Bihar
Cloth embroidered; 25 x 19 cms.
Upendra Maharathi Institute of Industrial Design

The First Step

It staggers a little on the long distance across the room to its mother and is unsteady just at first; somewhat overwhelmed by its own achievement and the sound of clapping hands from the waiting family. But it blinks for a moment and recovers itself. The child is upright. There will be tumbles and falls. And it will learn to accept these too as part learning.

And so within months the infant has become a child running out to play in the neighbourhood, sitting on the back of a buffalo homing at dusk, curious about all and everything, reaching up to explore shelves, building dams at the water hole or mud patties. Humming softly it makes play of everying it sees around itself.



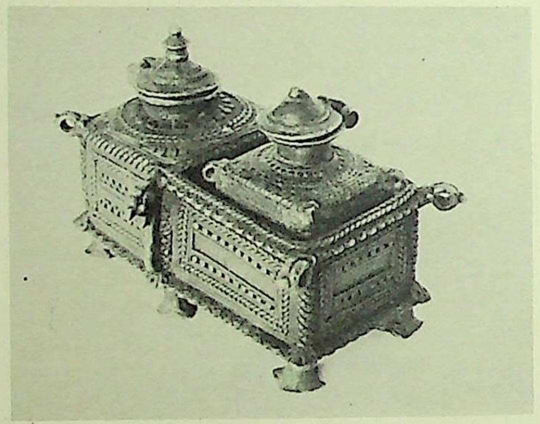
Krishna
19th century, Rajasthan
Terracotta; 40 x 13 cms.
Collection: Francis Wacziarg, New Delhi

Initiation into Learning

The Child: What a strange and wonderful feeling to be alive and to have a name of my own. In the house besides the baby who is too little to play, there is my mother, who sings. I too learn to sing these songs. My father tells me stories. His stories are different from those which my grandfather tells me when he sits with his friends in the courtyard. Sometimes strolling players come by; magicians, the monkey man, the singing mendicant and the snake charmer. My father buys me toys from the bazaar or from the travelling fair.

Sometimes we go to the temple and sometimes to the *chaupal* (village square) at the centre of our village. I like that. There are lights and bright colours all night and sometimes singers re-play the stories that I have heard. I connot understand it all, but the echo of drums chases me into sleep. When will I be old enough to read these stories for myself?

Elders: We are fortunate. It is a bright child and shows inclination. We shall call the scholar priest to the house. Let the priest guide his hand. And let him learn the word 'Bismillah' . . . 'Aum' . . . For so it has always been done in this family.



Dawat (ink well)
19th century, Deccan, Karnataka
Brass; 7 x 14 x 8 cms.
Kelkar Museum, Pune

Learning to be and to do

The Child: So many questions and other things to know about. Where do we come from? Why don't the stars fall from the sky? How do aeroplanes fly? They have brought electricity to the village. What is electricity? My friends and I sometimes talk about these things. What we will do when we grow big. We lay plans. One of my friends draws very well. But we all draw. My friend's sister is a good kite-flier and plays *guli-danda* (spindle and stick) after school with us. She says she is going to learn the answers to these questions. She says she is going to study and go where the aero-planes go. But I want to be tall and to work like my father.



Window panels
19th century, Rajasthan
Wood painted; 51 x 65 cms.
AIHB Crafts Museum, New Delhi

Moving Out

The Community: When the baby lay curled in the house of its mother's belly, it grew from a drop of water and a pinch of dust to being a fish and from a fish to a small human being complete with soul and spirit. And then its time came; it could no longer be contained by the walls of its mother's belly. And so it was delivered into this great world of light and heat and sound.

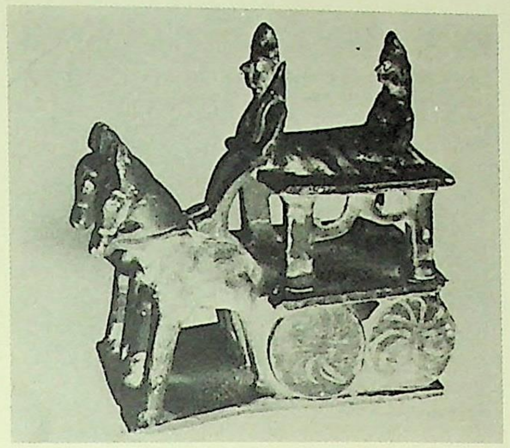
But we held the child close to us and protected it within the courtyard of our home and, as it grew still, it began to explore the village and its surrounding fields. At festival time we took it to the temple and the fair around its steps. Or to the *dargah*. To the courtyard of the High Mosque where the Sufis listen still to the sound of their mystic songs; and to the fairs outside the gates. Here it saw for the first time great crowds of men.

We took it to the city and it saw great buildings built by men. It entered the doors of learning and saw with open eyes the meaning of the stars and potency of the holy world. It entered the world of work and learned the meaning of skill of labour with other men of ideas, of commerce, and of sustaining this society of which we are all part.

The Parents: Now the child is no longer a child. Already we think of marriage and of prospects. What was once the seed of union is now itself ready to flower again. We have done what we could. We put freedom and responsibility into its open hands. How will these gifts be used by the next generation and by the next?

The Grown Child: That beaten red earth road that leads out of the village, leaving it behind; Ah! just to think of it, my mind is lost in dreams. (From a song by Rabindranath Tagore)

And so, out again into life. And again into life. And the world spins on. Again the great journey. And we disappear into the space beyond.



Horse Carriage
Contemporary, Nagaur, Rajasthan
Clay painted; 28 x 24 x 6 cms.
HHEC, New Delhi

Fairs and Festivals

But no matter how far the grown-up children go, they will return for marriages and ceremonies. And they will return at festival time with their own children. Then, child, mother, father and grandparents together become children again.



Playthings in a traditional society tend to be fewer, far more is left to natural ingenuity and imagination. Traditionally crafted toys show an exuberance, wit and skill that are no longer an intimate part of children's lives.

The child's first dolls would often be static, easy-to-grasp clay or wood. These may have a startling resemblance to icons, since the community who make and sell them are frequently the makers of votive figures and temple-carvings. (For the Hindu, a narrow but significant line separates a goddess or a god from being a plaything. This is the act of *prana-pratistha:* the ritual act that brings the image "alive" for worship.)

Meanwhile the seasons spin on in their circuit, the day-to-day family rituals and work-patterns alternating with fun and festival.

The child grows, his awareness expanding to encompass ideas and images larger than himself . . .

This will have been noticed by the elders of the family. As he took his first step, they gave him anklets so that walking would delight him. More seriously they took his weaning: the *annaprashana* is one of the *samskaras.* As the child tastes his first cereal, food of adult society, food that society labours to produce, he puts by a biological dependence on his mother.

Similarly, the *mundana* ceremony, the *karna-vid*, and each successive *samskara.* These take place at "auspicious" moments of convergence between lunar phase and solar cycle, marking a certain inevitable transition in the life of the child to a wider arena of freedom with its concommitant responsibilities.

The craftsman's son makes his way easily and naturally to his father's vocation, beginning with play and encouraged into collaboration. Meanwhile in those communities where literacy is highly valued the child will have made his first step toward formal education. In the Muslim community this is called the *Bismillah* and is solemnised as the child for the first time recites a Quranic text after the *Maulvi* or priest. The Hindu equivalent is the *vidya-arambhana.*

An interest in advanced study or in a specialisation different from those of his father's fathers would lead to an arrangement with a leading practitioner in whose household (or workshop) he would not only board and learn, but assist his teacher in various ways. In this *gurukula* or apprenticeship system the unspoken bonds between master and student would go deep. More would be learned regarding attitudes, values and approaches than the over-theoretical information our educational system yields.

In almost all orthodox groups the son's formal initiation into the religious community is as important as his entry into a vocational occupation. This marks adulthood and is, ideally, the crucial psychosomatic and spiritual transition.

More than any of the preceding *samskaras,* the *Upanayanam* or Brahmanical thread-ceremony incumbent on the first three castes (and according to Manu and the ninth *samsakara*), is a ritual of rebirth. Those to whom it applies are thenceforth known as *dvi-ja:* "twice-born". In earlier times the *Upanayanam* would precede formal entry into the *gurukula.* And so, in time, entry into marriage: and with marriage the state of the householder.

The young girl on the edge of womanhood experiences a natural, rather than a formal or religious initiation into womanhood. In certain of the older parts of the country such as Tamil Nadu, menarche, the first appearance of the *kumari-phul* (literally "the flower of maidenhood"), is celebrated socially with feasting and with gladness. Arrangements have been already or will soon be made towards impending marriage.

This, to the Indian way of thinking, is to walk with open eyes into the chambers of maturity. (Contemporary living, with its noticeable absence of attention to major psycho-somatic transitions, may frequently lead to delayed identity-crisis.) It will be observed that the traditional spiral-view of growth and transference based on the mutual responsibility of generations implied acceptance and a celebration of personal growth and maturity in all its stages. Contemporary living lacks this sureness, but replaces definition with additional choices.

In the village, a son may soon be leaving for the city. Whether it be to a construction site, to a clerk's office or to a small-town college; wherever he finds himself, if he is not lost to himself now, he will never be lost to himself. And if the young girl follows her husband to the city, she will encounter startling alterations in her life-style perhaps, but she may well find a reservoir of strength within herself on which to draw. If connections so far have not been lost, they may yet withstand all stresses for another couple of generations. For the children and the children's children will return. Already perhaps new seed is swelling. And in the right season, this too will be harvested.

Pria Devi

Note

As to the use "Aditi" made of certain metaphors such as life-cycle and the Tree of Life, there is reason to believe that *rasa*, a key term to Indian aesthetics from the *natya-shastra* on, derived originally from archaic fertility rites and tree-cults of the vital fluid. This gained weight in the Vedic period with the *Soma-Agni* cluster of myths, touched metaphysic in the *Taittiriya-samhita* and became the basis for ancient Indian sciences (*rasayanashastra* and the science of *ayu* from the *Atharvaveda* on). We have reason to belive from the indication of the *Tantras* that this was originally a single stream that forked subsequently into arts and poetics, and the *siddhantas.*

The designers/organisers of "Aditi" are agreed that this composite meaning of *rasa* as the vital essence or fluid of life may be recycled, in vernacular cultures still, whether consciously or unconsciously, throughout the country. The simplest and most obvious example is the 'cycle of generations', an attitude shared by almost all traditional communities.

References

1 *Natya-Shastra*, VI: 38. Quoted from *Natya-Shastra: Treatise on Hindu Drâmaturgy and Histrionics*, Vol. I, translated by Manmohan Ghose, Royal Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1950.

The *Abhinava-Bharati* by Abhinavagupta offers three or four variant interpretations of this metaphor alone. The "seed which is the root" (or the "egg which is the peacock") applies equally to the logos among Kashmir Shaivas. Its application here is specifically to *rasa* and creativity.

2 "Aditi" is not strictly concerned at this point with the sociological issues of traditionalism as opposed to modernism or modernism versus traditionalism, nor with questions of cultural transition and adjustment, urgent as these issues must be to any Indian today. "Aditi's" primary thrust is towards the quality of life without which no good can take place. In all cases it is structural integrity that reveals the values behind it. The pressure of industrial substitutes for craft and of the disappearance of need-based crafts as the traditional needs fall away is, however, serious enough to plan for. The history of the Indian craft movement during the last thirty years indicates the serious nature of the problems.

3 The four traditional stages of life are those of the Student (this carries the meaning of celibacy in the Way of the *Brahman*), the Householder (active participation in family life and citizenship), the Forest-dweller (retirement), and the Ascetic (the reduction of needs; by implication power has passed on).

4 *Manusmriti*, 11-27. According to Manu *samskaras* begin with the "Rite of impregnation."

Here indeed is evidence of another, but much deeper, cyclical pattern. The origin of the *samskaras* lies in the concept of re-birth and in the belief that each individual as he enters life carries with him the positive (and negative) results of actions from previous lives. *Samskara* means literally the sum or collective effect of what is done. For Hindus therefore, even the brief sleep that precedes birth and follows after death cannot interrupt the supreme importance of right action with its metaphysical consequences. The nature of existence depends upon it. And its causality is, as it were, written into the genetic code of the new seed, just as the plant's response to a good or bad year will be written into the grain and the grain's subsequent harvest. The cycle of *karma* only resolves itself when the individual himself breaks through the cycle by transcending it.

5 There is a pattern to the migrant worker's move to the city. He will go alone or together with a cluster of other men from the village in search of work. As soon as he gets to the city he will instinctively seek out those of his own village or community who have preceded him. The construction-worker in Delhi a few years ago was usually from Rajasthan and had left his land only because it was no longer workable. Once he had secured a temporary job he might send for his wife and they would work together on the same building-site; to be joined, after they had found their bearings, by the children. Even if he lived in a *basti* or shanty-town, he would choose to live, as far as possible, together with workers from his own locality. They would gossip together in the evenings and sing and attempt to approximate the old festivals. The women would become neighbours, passing on advice as to how best to survive under pressure.

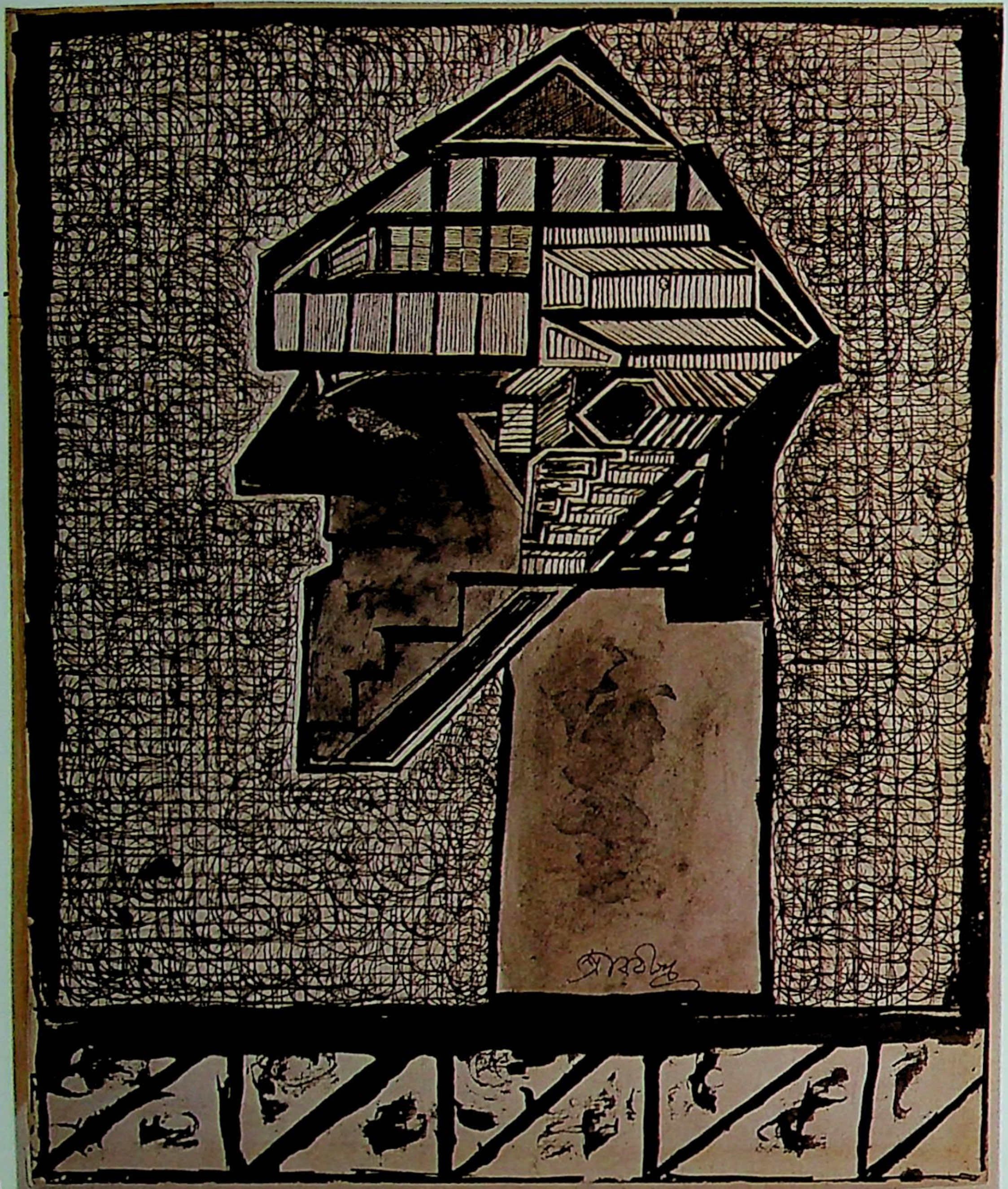
Some years ago an organisation was formed by a group of concerned people which provided creches to feed and to mind the babies on site so as to permit working mothers to go about their work with less anxiety. These creches soon began to follow groups of construction-workers from site to site, expanding to vocational training, short-term adult-literacy classes and medicare.

It is interesting that these worker's children, while expressing themselves in paint choose vibrant colours, confidently and unhesitatingly occupying the whole picture-space with images of suns and camels, trees and deities, and mothers rocking cradles.

For those to whom the shift to the city has not meant giving up their land, things are easier. The eldest son usually works the holding with his father while a younger son in the city will earn the cash that will go to make improvements. Whether he is a cab-driver or a clerk, he will return to help with the harvest and will take back a little of it with him. He will turn homeward with his wife and children annually or at least once every couple of years, carrying gifts and news back from the city to each of the older family members. He will try to plan this around one of the bigger festivals. He may leave his wife and children behind for a spell to help the older people at times of trouble or sickness. And he returns, of course, to attend the next marriage in the family.

15 Yellamma-Gangamma
Contemporary, Andhra Pradesh
Papier mâché and polychrome; 48 x 37 x 19 cms.
Collection: Rajeev Sethi, New Delhi





1

Six Indian Painters

RABINDRANATH TAGORE
JAMINI ROY
AMRITA SHER-GIL
M.F. HUSAIN
K.G. SUBRAMANYAN
BHUPEN KHAKHAR

The six painters selected to show at the Tate Gallery reflect the specific sensibility of Howard Hodgkin and it would be artificial to build a little history of modern Indian art on its basis. However, the exhibition spans a period of fifty years; there is the distance between Tagore's small, dark pictures and Husain's extravagant photographs and inevitably a kind of perspective open[illegible] before the viewer. This marks out no objective criteria but areas of painterly attitude and active choice which it would be interesting to treat as vantage points for the moment. A fuller and more 'correct' picture of contemporary Indian art can be provided easily enough.

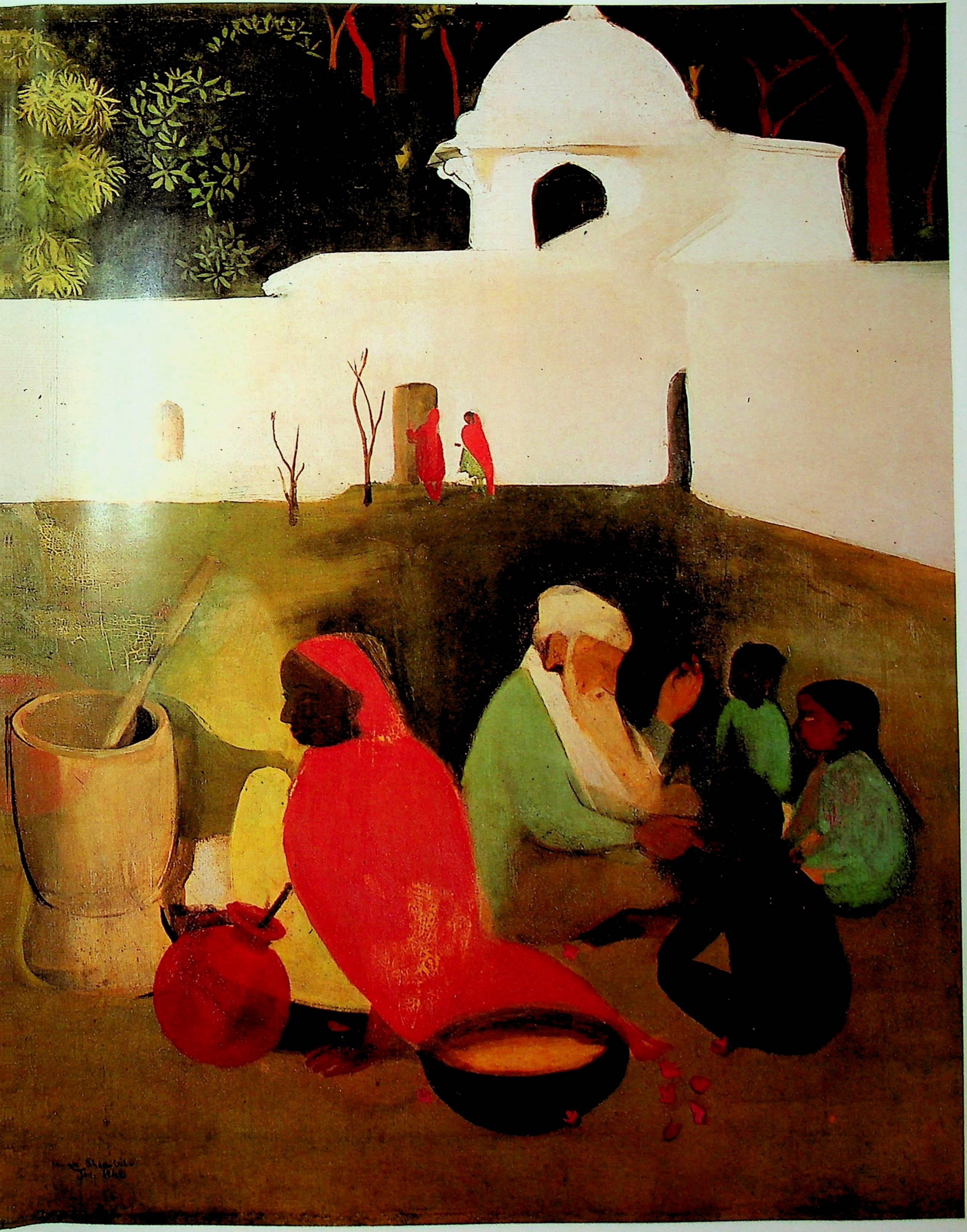
1 **Head Study** (Geometric); Rabindranath Tagore
Pen, ink and wash on paper; 19 x 25 cms.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

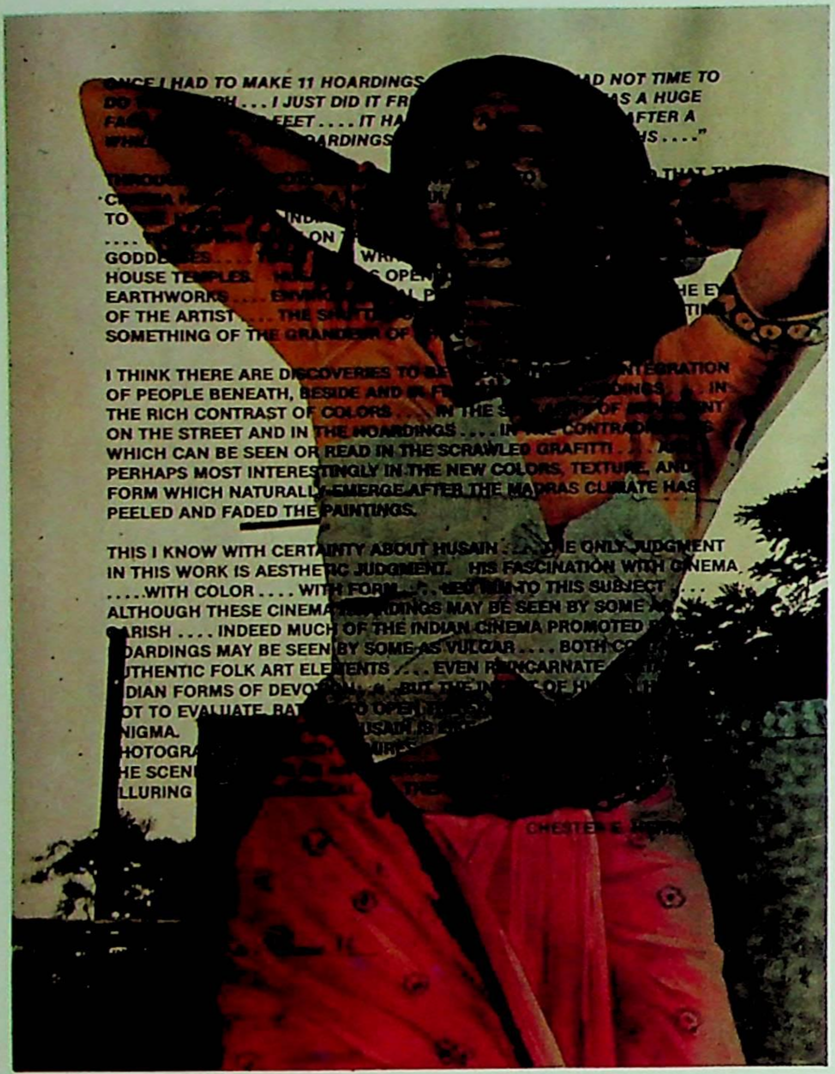
2 **Flight to Egypt**; Jamini Roy
Tempera on cloth; 118 x 53 cms.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

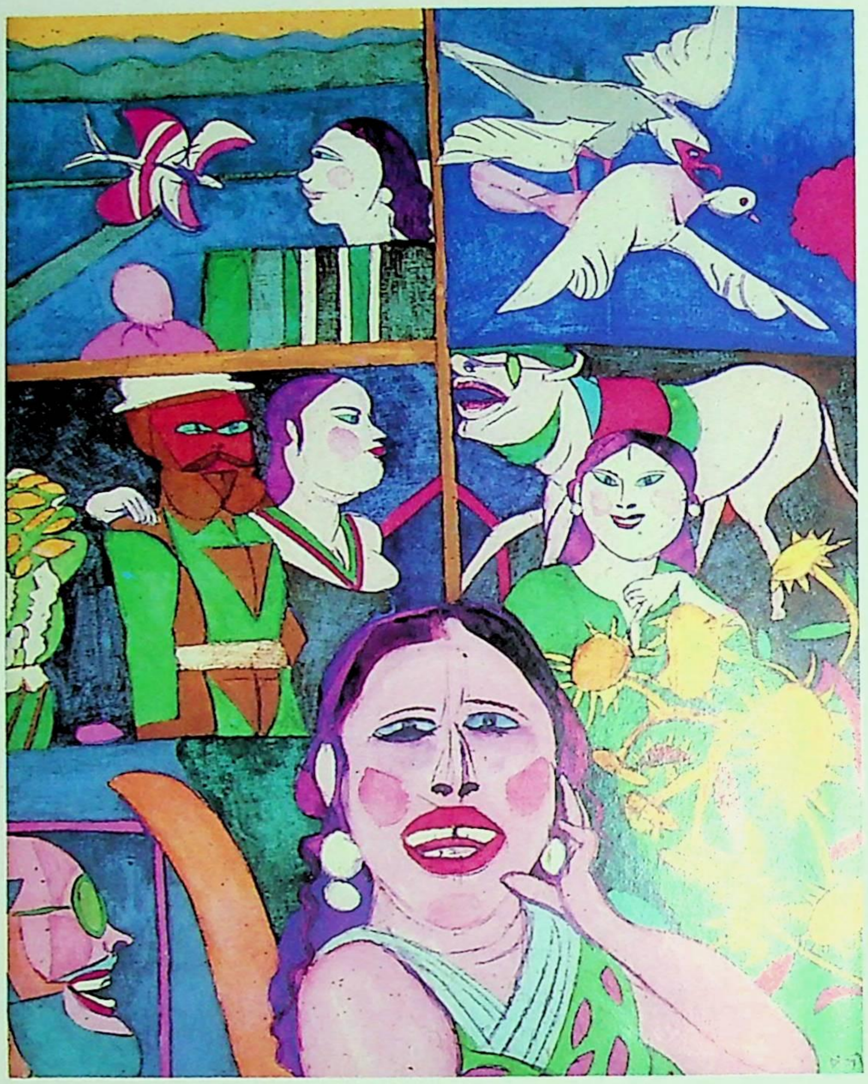
3 **The Ancient Story-Teller**; Amrita Sher-Gil
Oil on canvas; 74 x 90 cms.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi



2




I THINK THERE ARE DISCOVERIES TO BE
OF PEOPLE BENEATH, BESIDE AND IN
THE RICH CONTRAST OF COLORS . . . . IN THE
ON THE STREET AND IN THE HOARDINGS . . . .
WHICH CAN BE SEEN OR READ IN THE SCRAWLED GRAFITTI . . . .
PERHAPS MOST INTERESTINGLY IN THE NEW COLORS, TEXTURE, AND
FORM WHICH NATURALLY EMERGE AFTER THE MADRAS CLIMATE HAS
PEELED AND FADED THE PAINTINGS.
THIS I KNOW WITH CERTAINTY ABOUT HUSAIN . . . . THE ONLY JUDGMENT
IN THIS WORK IS AESTHETIC JUDGMENT. HIS FASCINATION WITH CINEMA
. . . . .WITH COLOR . . . . WITH FORM . . . . LED HIM TO THIS SUBJECT . . . .
ALTHOUGH THESE CINEMA HOARDINGS MAY BE SEEN BY SOME AS
INDEED MUCH OF THE INDIAN CINEMA PROMOTED
MAY BE SEEN BY SOME AS VULGAR . . . . BOTH
FOLK ART ELEMENTS . . . . EVEN REINCARNATE
4


5

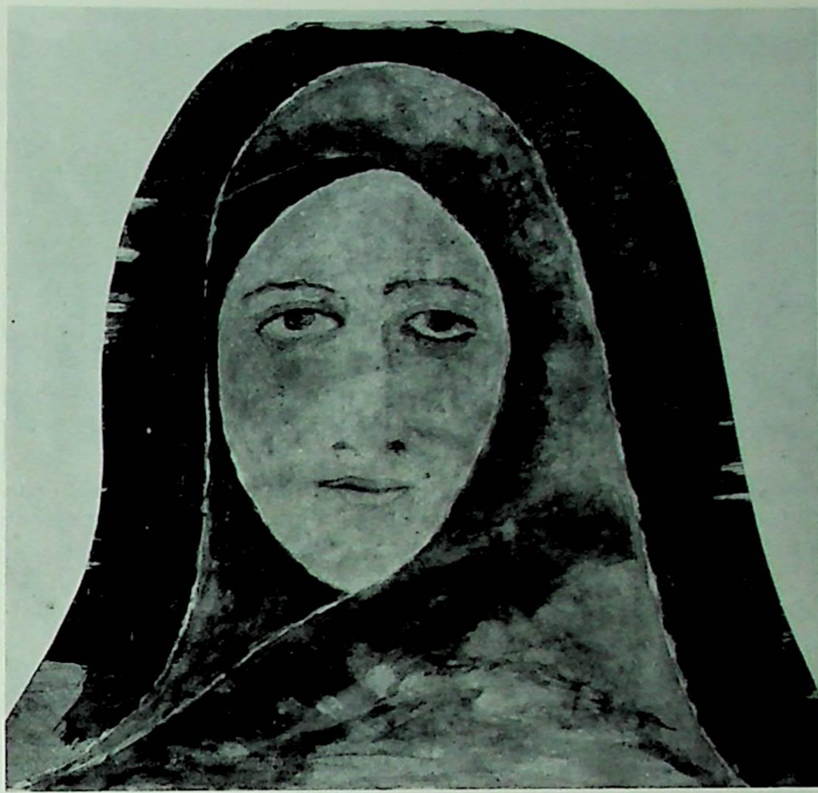

6

This view confirms, first of all, a romantic commitment to the remembered encounter, and its embodiment in the *Image*. ('The kind of sensual/romantic/passionate/emotional feelings that artists have do appeal to people. The only way an artist can communicate with the world at large is at the level of feeling. I think the function of the artist is to practise his art to such a level that like a soul leaving the body, it comes out into the world and affects other people.' Hodgkin, in an interview with Timothy Hyman.) It would be true to say that almost *all* Indian art is imagist in this particular, romantic sense. Two further aspects of this are brought into focus here: an interest in the naive, heightened by the fact that the means have so overtaken the motives in later twentieth century art that sometimes only the naive vision seems to retain the image intact; and, alternatively, a curiosity about the ways of putting a picture together. But this is not so much an avant-garde concern as an attraction for the kind of eclecticism you get in popular art, for the *wit* that makes the motif come alive.

More specifically, the selection draws the viewer's attention to the grammar of painting practised by some of the important Indian artists; first of all to *colour,* which precedes and then suffuses the grammatical construction, then to an array of painterly marks—informal marks counterposed with the virtuoso touch of the decorative artist who is a little like the performing artist in the exercise of his skills. On the whole there is here a predilection for the *anonymous mark,* for whether this comes from innocence or high craft it has, as against the autograph mark, the quality of disinterestedness which makes art at once language and play.

Along with the grammar, artists continue to test the language of representation and though he deeply doubts whether this is any more *possible* Howard Hodgkin seems nevertheless to be partial to artists who attempt—naively or ambitiously—to keep a hold on the face, figure, place, and to simulate, pictorially, life's ritual quality.

But while some significant aspects of Indian art can be glimpsed from pivoting oneself on this one fine sensibility, there are other aspects that are equally important.



7

Rabindranath Tagore

If we did not know that Tagore started painting when he was already sixty-seven (until his death at the age of eighty-one he had painted nearly two thousand pictures in ink and gouache) would we guess that the pictures are the vision of an aging poet? Expecting to transfer the cadence of his poetry and music to painting he insisted on the rhythmic quality of his forms. But though the doodles and smudges and the rich rough chiaroscuro of inky lines had quite remarkable graphic qualities there is little of the life-enhancing rhythm in the actual images. The scratches on the corrected manuscript 'cried out, like sinners, for salvation', he says, and they are grateful to find forms: jokey, dishevelled, enchanted forms, also forms crabbed by regret and left adrift on lapsed time. There is the occasional arabesque that springs out sheerly, and there is a quality of play in the loop and zigzag, and in the free decorative mark. But, though the fantasy is in a sense naive, it is not youthful. There is no doubt that this is a clairvoyant soul sifting the residue of his exalted life, and the images we glimpse in it are far from angelic.

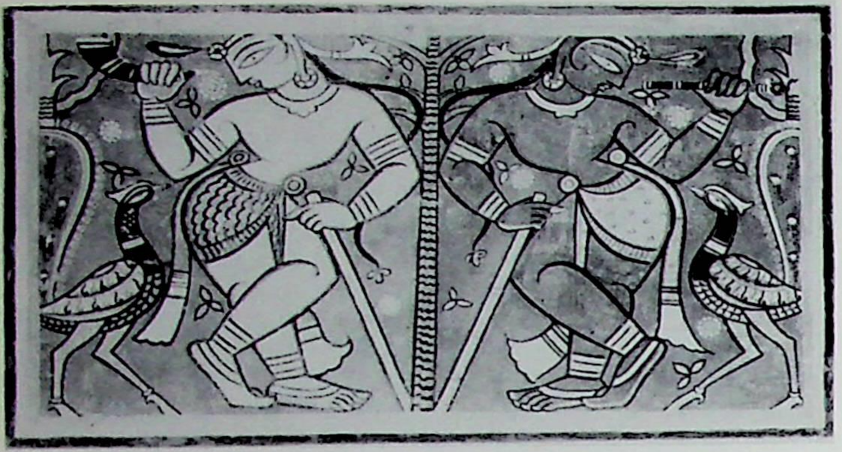
In his paintings he touches an archaic source. Like Coomaraswamy, Tagore probably knew about Jung; he had seen at least some superior examples of Expressionist painting. This is in a way acknowledged when he says, 'I have a force acting in me . . . that ever tries to win me for itself . . . this life impulse I speak of belongs to a personality beyond the ego.' Once this vein is exposed it is easy to see that in all his creative work there is, beneath the sublime aesthetic, an entire network that carries the burden of his melancholy and reveals, not infrequently, a harsh confessional note.

4 Culture of the Streets
M. F. Husain
Collection: C. E. Herwitz

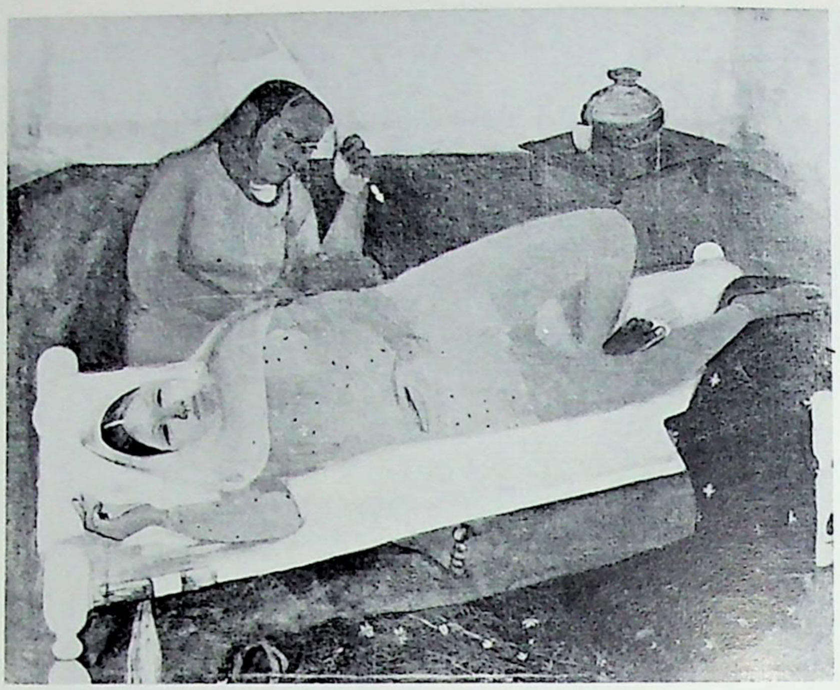
5 Reverie of an Army Man's Wife (1981)
K. G. Subramanyan
Painting on acrylic sheet; 444.5 x 61 cms.

6 Celebration of Guru Jayanti (1980)
Bhupen Khakhar
Oil on canvas; 170 x 246.5 cms.

7 Woman Face
Rabindranath Tagore
Ink on paper; 50.8 x 54 cms.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi



8 **Krishna and Balarama**; Jamini Roy
Tempera; 148 x 87 cms.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi



9 **Woman on Charpai** (1940)
Amrita Sher-Gil
Oil on Canvas; 85 x 72.4 cms.
Courtesy: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

Jamini Roy

Midstream in his successful career Jamini Roy dropped oil painting and adopted the style and the working methods of the *patuas.* These are the folk painters of his native Bengal who illustrate the Puranic gods and legends (or the admonishments of the tribal deities) and often combine the bards' function, matching the narrative in the painted scroll with song and story-telling. As a tribute to these vanishing skills, Roy started a workshop in Calcutta and set it up with apprentices (including his sons) who learnt the decorative conventions and copied by the dozen, motifs devised by him. The first intention of the workshop was to replace the bourgeois notion of the artist's uniqueness with an artisan's modesty and the second, to make art available to the Bengali middle-class robbed of its sensibility by colonial culture.

Roy chooses as his subject-matter a variety of social eccentrics: the Santal tribals, the Vaishnava saints, and the Bauls—the mad minstrels of mixed Hindu-Muslim origin. And by a naive but fairly apt extension, he adopts the image of the Byzantine Christ. More correctly, perhaps, the image resembles the Christ of the European provinces, and not only because of the obvious archaism of style but because here He is still a man of holy poverty. Roy devises an emblematic form for his subject-matter recognising this to be a major point of coincidence between the primitive tradition of image-making and the *modern.* And working on the decorative principle he can, at his best, make the visual elements spring into a configuration and cohere as a motif.

It might be correct to say that Roy introduces into modern Indian art an interest in language as such. Take his use of colour. When he reverts to indigenous material he is restricted to Indian red, yellow-ochre, and green; vermillion, indigo blue, grey and white. The linear brushwork is done by dipping the brush in lamp-black. He binds them usually with white of egg or tamarind-seed glue; the painting surface is prepared by a coating of cowdung and lime spread on homespun cloth, board, or paper. Thus the picture surface achieves a textural resonance familiar from painted fabrics, from frescoes, from the Indian landscape. The question of ethnicity is here being tested at a very basic, sensuous level.

Roy is more convincing when his figures display bouncing convexities resembling pots made on the wheel, or the audacious little toys. And so in fact his little drawings, with the squat, fat, pop-eyed figures (a take-off on the doll-deities of the Jagannath ensemble), are the most engaging. Such images, bristling with multiple contours, have the liveliness of the popular theatre which formed Roy's enduring interest. And this brings us back full circle. Possibly, the *patuas* learnt to animate their figures from following the staccato rhythm of the puppet theatre. And, possibly, Jamini Roy most resembles the *patuas* because he is a natural puppet-master.

Amrita Sher-Gil

On her return to India Amrita Sher-Gil's first effort is to find a mode of delineation appropriate to her Indian subjects. She attempts, in her ambitious way, to fuse the superlative grace of the Ajanta figures with the characterisation of the dramatic personae in European art, their self-conscious and precise turn of the head, torso, hand. Paintings of this period show how well she understands the *mannerist* inclinations in these two divergent traditions. This she matches with what she perceives to be the grave melancholy of her native subjects and gives the figures a *contour and gesture* carefully designed to carry a sense of pathos.

As soon as she comes to be at home in India this pathos is replaced by a more natural, un-insistent sympathy with her subjects. The imposing tableaux of the sad-eyed race give way to everyday scenes. The figures, placed in their village ambience, are now at a little distance from the view but the pictures are curiously more intimate. It is the Mughal miniatures that teach her that genre painting can be disciplined, detached, tender (and in its tiny format, epical). From Pahari miniatures she learns little audacities of pictorial depiction. And so she embarks on the illustration of Indian life.

With this change of focus to the familiar and lively appearance of the world around her, *colour* becomes the primary element in the pictures.

Once this much is secured she sifts her skills in a rapid sequence, to discover the overall design that will suit her purpose. The contours of a figure, and the colour surface it encloses are deftly *disaligned* to suggest animation. Unreasonable masses of white float in the picture. There are other devices: the use of decorative marks (fat red flowers in the garland of the *Musicians*) and informal, notational shapes (like the buffaloes in the last unfinished painting) so that the language begins to look distinctly modern. This is significant because she has as it were reversed the process. It is by testing her European sensibility against her Indian experience, and the splendid examples of Indian painting, that she has arrived at a modern idiom. What is more significant is that the idiom retains the possibility for a humane depiction of the life around her.

M. F. Husain

M. F. Husain's photographic images, parodying the plethora of images in the Indian street, are sufficiently tough to suggest that among all the artists it is Husain who can best cope with the great burlesque of the Indian bazaar. A romantic anecdote adds to this. When Husain arrived in Bombay in the thirties to try his luck as a painter he earned his living painting cinema hoardings. And even as a poor, shy provincial youth he had the pluck to simply spread the canvas across the tram-tracks when the traffic ceased around midnight and, without squaring the photographs, paint the film stars ten times larger than life. This trick of scale has come in handy later: he clambers up scaffolding to paint 'free-hand' murals and executes, with instant effect, banner paintings to be carried on trucks in political processions.

Scale is a curious thing, it implies courage and with that a message of some sort. Husain can be said to have always risked crossing the line towards populism. This can be a misguided affair (even with revolutionary backing populism runs into difficulties) but, where other Indian artists may err on the side of the esoteric and the sentimental, Husain's bravado is a shot in the arm. His recent photographs certainly are, especially because he shifts from conventional peasant populism to urban culture where the lumpen dream is too explosive to allow prolonged mystification.

Can we speak of Husain's new pictorial language when he takes on the film image ready-made? The hoardings draw you into a larger-than-life reality which the film offers; Husain first states the *autonomy* of the image. You are attracted to the face of the beloved ruined by time and vandals, and then to all the pictorial delights of an unintended collage: the dislocation of limbs in the faulty paste-up of a film poster, a Red slogan, abusive cartoons, roughly brushed white-wash, and the decorative lettering of the Tamil script; above all, the way the hard, bright colours swing round the sculptural figures and butt against each other. There is some aspect of early modernism in this ironic approach, and a nostalgia for the first phase of protest and artistic freedom which discomfited the bourgeois. But Husain's photographs, in their basically non-partisan, non-intellectual nature, resemble— more than, say, Dada—the aesthetic of Pop.

One derives the value-pattern of the new mythology from Husain's editorial intercutting between image and reality. Indeed the photographs, so remarkably well constructed, are like explosive little semiological charts of the Indian city- street.

K. G. Subramanyan

Underlying the wit and charm of K. G. Subramanyan's little glass pictures there are years of apprenticeship to conventions where conscious purpose is in perfect coordination with *the deft hand*, and where the marks and accents of the ensuing sign system become inconspicuously transformed. The first lesson comes from the working techniques of the artist-craftsman of the Indian tradition. (Subramanyan is an authority on the complex weaving processes in India; as a sculptor he has worked with fibre, and with clay; his terracotta reliefs are among his major achievements.) Traditional art practice has taught him that virtuosity, far from being a matter of vanity, indicates the artist's self-effacement; that it helps to circumvent the problem of originality and leads him towards the uncommon ease where *art and play meet.*

In Indian aesthetics play has mystical attributes; Indian art offers play as polyvalent fantasy. Subramanyan adds to this a mischievous element. His glass paintings present the follies of the sensual life. But one is never certain whether the clue to the picture lies in the inventory of stylistic references, in the wry, slightly malicious humour with which the girls are presented, or the enchanting *manner* of touch, colour, gesture. The vulgarity seems to be weighed against what is almost a transformative *system*: set motifs, covert puns, freshly invented signs—and the continuing erotic game spins into a dazzling pirouette. It comes to rest with the modernist method of construing the image—with reference to the economy, the opulence and the enigma of the Matisse image, for example.

He uses both water colour and oil paint to get different densities, and since in glass painting the pigment is seen *through* the glass (and what is uppermost on the surface, like the dots on a dress, is painted first, the larger areas of colour brushed-in last) he uses surprise variations in the pattern and registration of the two surfaces, adding to that a third more resplendent surface, the open-work pattern of the unpainted glass and the see-through gold.

The fascination of glass as such—mirrors, lamps—and its pairing with gold has served to invest icons with a mystic splendour. Also the barber shop with its glamour. And this is precisely why Subramanyan paints on glass, to mock with his formal ingenuity the fear of seduction. Into the bargain he mocks our prejudices about high and low art.

Bhupen Khakhar

With a curious, almost naive ardour Bhupen Khakhar has shaped the wobbly contours of the human figure and, blending the hues with small soft brushes, has developed ways of modelling the body until it is completely plastic, and tender. In the process he has confirmed the existence of this one person he paints repeatedly: the fictional friend to whom many real persons in his life correspond. But Khakhar not only represents him, *he brings him to life*: the face with its prominent, ungainly features gains a slow, queer focus. This is Khakhar's private triumph, rescuing the friend from the oblivion of his undistinguished birth and from the kind of morality where he may be taboo. There is social subversion here, but at heart it is a desperate business.

If a part of the problem of painting the figure today is the enfeebled self-perception of the middle class individual, Khakhar is at a definite advantage in being Indian. Timid and half-formed, the middle class Indian still has this absurdly long past. His vast geneology is only an infinitesimal part of the cosmic life cycle.

For many years Khakhar has looked at the Italian Primitives and it is now clear that the affinity he sought lay in the struggle to give life; in painting the first breath, and with that the contortion, and the little ecstasy. The affinity as we now discover lies also in the way the narration unfolds, in the way the lives of the humble people, conducted through small awkward gestures, wind through the modest labyrinth of the city—painted by the Sienese, for example, with such unmatched sense of enclosure, of splendid structure and of space. All this makes precise sense because Khakhar has looked closely at those Indian miniatures where the everyday life of the people finds its intimate rhythm. And because he has lived for as long in a provincial city where you can still see men going about their appointed tasks without any kind of self-assertion.

The painter develops his pictorial fiction by transubstantiating life into pigment and paint-matter; Khakhar's peculiar paint surface should therefore be read as a sign. The sensuousness is veiled, tremulous, *diffuse*. It is also obsessive. This takes one to the heart of the matter, to the vulnerabilities. At the same time it provides a clue to the uncanny sense of withdrawal in his otherwise social paintings. For while the life Khakhar paints is to an astonishing degree the life he lives, he is, spritually, something of a *flaneur*—half visitor, half voyeur. For him the experience that is first hand is always inherently distanced. And the paintings as a result sustain this baffling, comic-sublime, quality of *disinterestedness.*

Geeta Kapur

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ART



1

It was peculiarly appropriate to show contemporary Indian art in Britian *now.* In the past five years there has been a frequent exchange of visitors—artists and writers—between the two countries, accompanied with a dialogue more lively than it has ever been before. At the official level this exchange may have come about in consequence of the growing interest in the Third World countries which are getting to have a larger say in international politics. With Britain, however, it works at another level as well; even a chance encounter revives past history and areas of signification which the two cultures pick up almost intuitively.

Let me add right away that for all this there is no gullibility; on either part. It is presupposed rather that at the conscious, ideological level both sides will proceed with a measured step towards some mutually satisfactory meeting ground. Further, all the goodwill and sentiment they offer notwithstanding, the actual initiative will have to come from *us.* If we do decide to enter the international arena chauvinist sentiments will have to be put aside; perhaps we should have the confidence that initiative means in the long run serious intervention.

When the plans for the Festival of India got under way an exhibition of Indian art was conceived by the Tate Gallery. This was a wholly British affair, selected by Howard Hodgkin, one of their most eminent artists, who is familiar with Indian art but who has, like all artists, strong preferences. It became clear that this exhibition was a mere gesture and it was rightfully the task of the Government of India to present an important exhibition of contemporary art. To this effect Mrs. Pupul Jayakar undertook to find an appropriate venue and arranged with Sir Hugh Casson, President of the Royal Academy of Arts, to hold the exhibition at Burlington House. It was a fortunate arrangement and we received the most gracious co-operation from the Royal Academy, from Sir Hugh and from the staff, headed by Annette Bradshaw, when we arrived there with the exhibits. (It should be mentioned that another fairly large exhibition of Indian art was organised by the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford.)

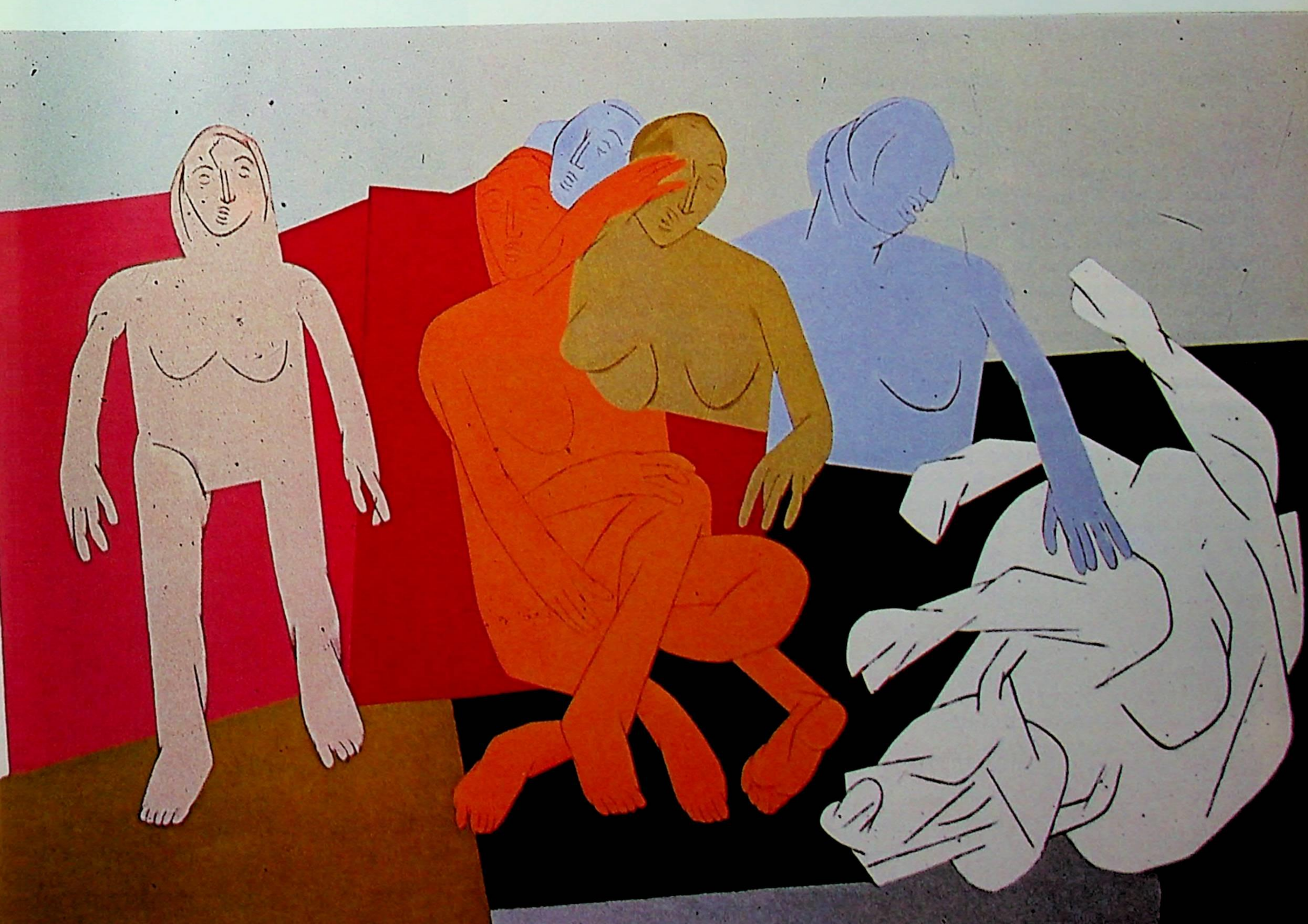
The three commissioners, Richard Bartholowmew, Akbar Padamsee and myself, drawing on our knowledge of the Indian art scene, made lists of artists and their works more than a year in advance of the exhibition. We mutually checked on work that was not familiar to one or the other member, and the lists were revised several times before we finally agreed on 45 names. (Eventually 43 showed; this included 27 painters, 7 graphic artists, and 11 sculptors.) As we had decided to select the exhibits down to the last detail, it took several months of extended correspondence to locate and book the works we wanted. These came to 133 in all.

1 Between the Spider and the Lamp
(1956)
M.F.Husain
Oil on board; 122 x 244 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New Delhi



2 Ramu's *Dhaba* (1979)
Krishen Khanna
Acrylic on canvas; 212 x 160 cms.
Collection: Mr. & Mrs. R. S. Duggal,
New Delhi

3 Sequence (1981)
Tyeb Mehta
Oil on canvas; 260 x 175 cms.
Chester Herwitz Family Collection,
Worchester, U.S.A.



The constraints of space necessitated that the exhibition be held in two stages: the first from 18 September to 5 October and the second from 9 October to 31 October. We decided to turn the situation into something of an advantage by grouping the works in thematic/stylistic sections. The titles, however, were kept reasonably flexible so as not to force too tight a category on any artist. The more or less pragmatic division was used, in other words, to provide *visual coherence.* I give below the title, the description, and the constituents of each of the two shows.

I The Gesture, and Motif

18 September —5 October, 1982

The Gesture is the principal attribute of the figure in the pictures of several Indian artists who set a seal on the figure with it. But the work is gestural also in a painterly sense; it is an autograph mark. The gesture is the evidence of a wager in the romantic sense and, formally speaking, the pictures have an emblematic quality, a compressed, abbreviated syntax and high stylization. But it is interesting that in the subsequent, more indigenous phase as well, where the motifs are drawn from clearly Indian sources, the image is again seen as a full-formed vision that has sprung up by a concentration of imaginative powers. These artists offer what can be called *revealed motifs.*

The exhibition included the works of the following artists:

Painters: M. F. Husain, F. N. Souza, Akbar Padamsee, Tyeb Mehta, S. H. Raza, Ram Kumar, V. S. Gaitonde, Bal Chhabda, K. C. S. Paniker, Biren De, J. Swaminathan, G. R. Santosh, Manu Parekh.

Graphic Artists: Krishna Reddy, Jeram Patel, Nasreen Mohamedi, Arpita Singh.

Sculptors: Satish Gujral, A. M. Davierwalla, Meera Mukerjee, Nagji Patel, K. Kunhiraman, Latika Katt.

II Stories, Situations

9 October—31 October, 1982

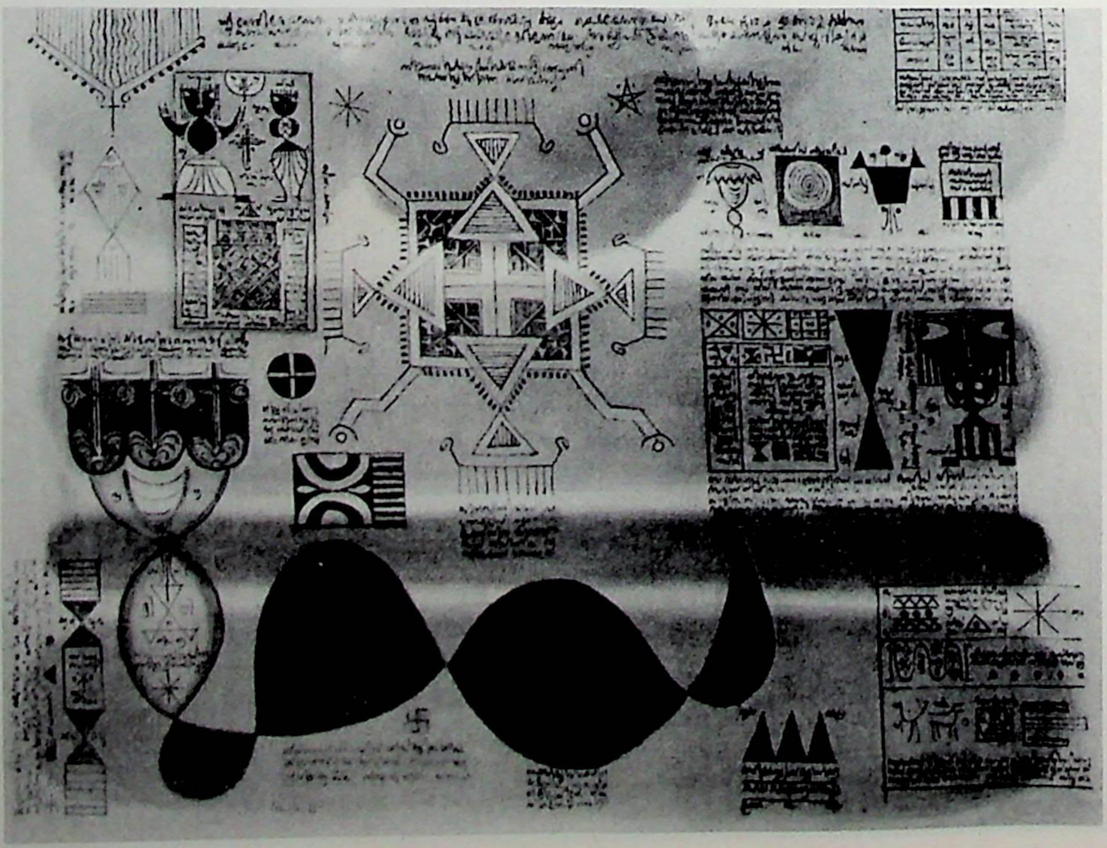
Since the 1970's the specific physiognomy of Indian figures is slowly uncovered, and some of the artists adopt that ancient activity of story-telling which bridges the commonplace and the fabulous worlds. However, in strictly urban situations, where the artist is born outside tradition, experience presents itself like a puzzle; you fit together the parts according to a willed purpose. Narration becomes allegorical. Used self-consciously and with the necessary freedom and flexibility, an allegorical art can handle quite complex ideological positions. Like the historical construct, it can trace the trajectories of individual and collective motivation. This is the premise of recent figuration in India.

During this period the works of the following artists were on display:

Painters: Krishen Khanna, A. Ramachandran, Bhupen Khakhar, Gulam mohammed Sheikh, Gieve Patel, Vivan Sundaram, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Jogen Chowdhury, Nalini Malani, Sudhir Patwardhan, Ranbir Singh Kaleka, Manjeet Bawa, Ganesh Pyne.



4



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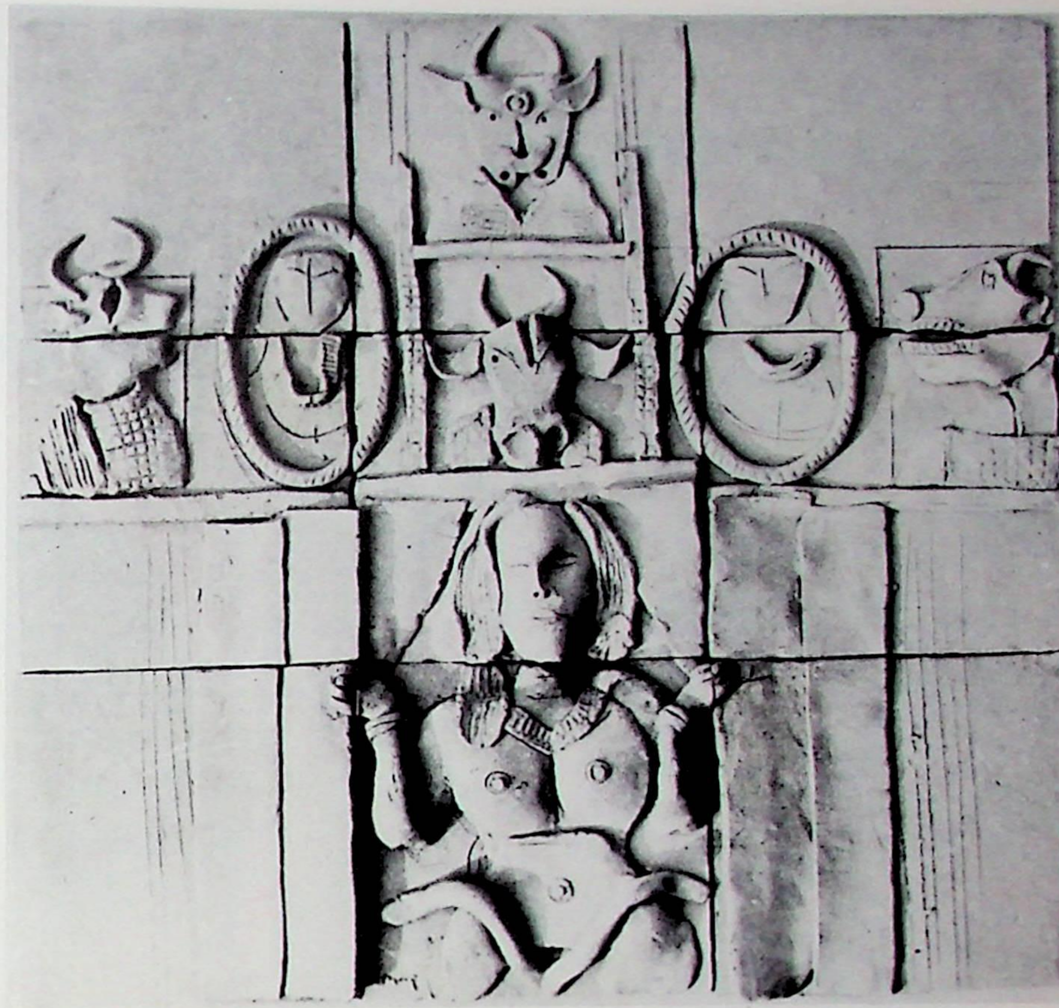
4 Mythology—Nandi, Parvati, Ganesha (1974)
F.N. Souza; Oil on canvas; 122 x 103 cms.
Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi

5 Words and Symbols (1967)
K.C.S. Paniker; Oil on canvas; 152.5 x 119.5 cms.
National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

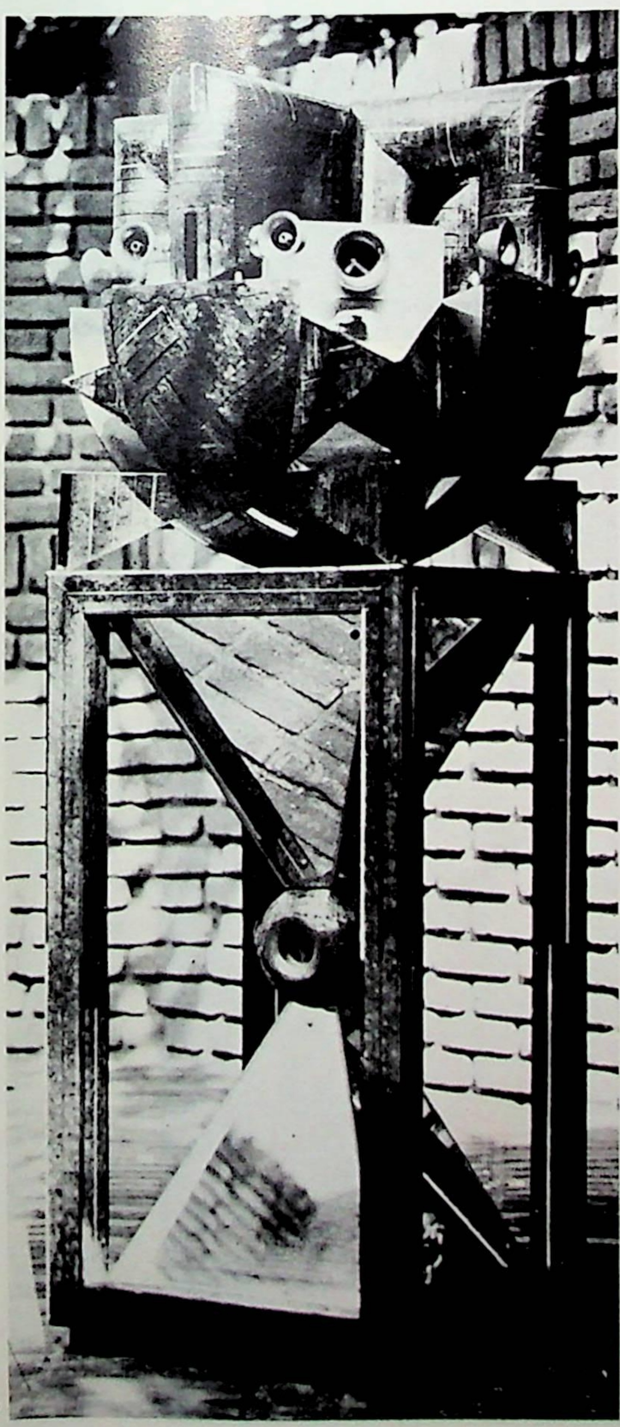
6 Untitled (1979)
K.G. Subramanyan; Terracotta; 56 x 56 cms.
Collection: The Artist, Shantiniketan

7 Ganesha (1975)
Satish Gujral; Assorted metal; 62 x 62 x 141 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New Delhi

8 Animal (1974)
Nagji Patel; Black marble; 23 x 60 x 46 cms.
National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi



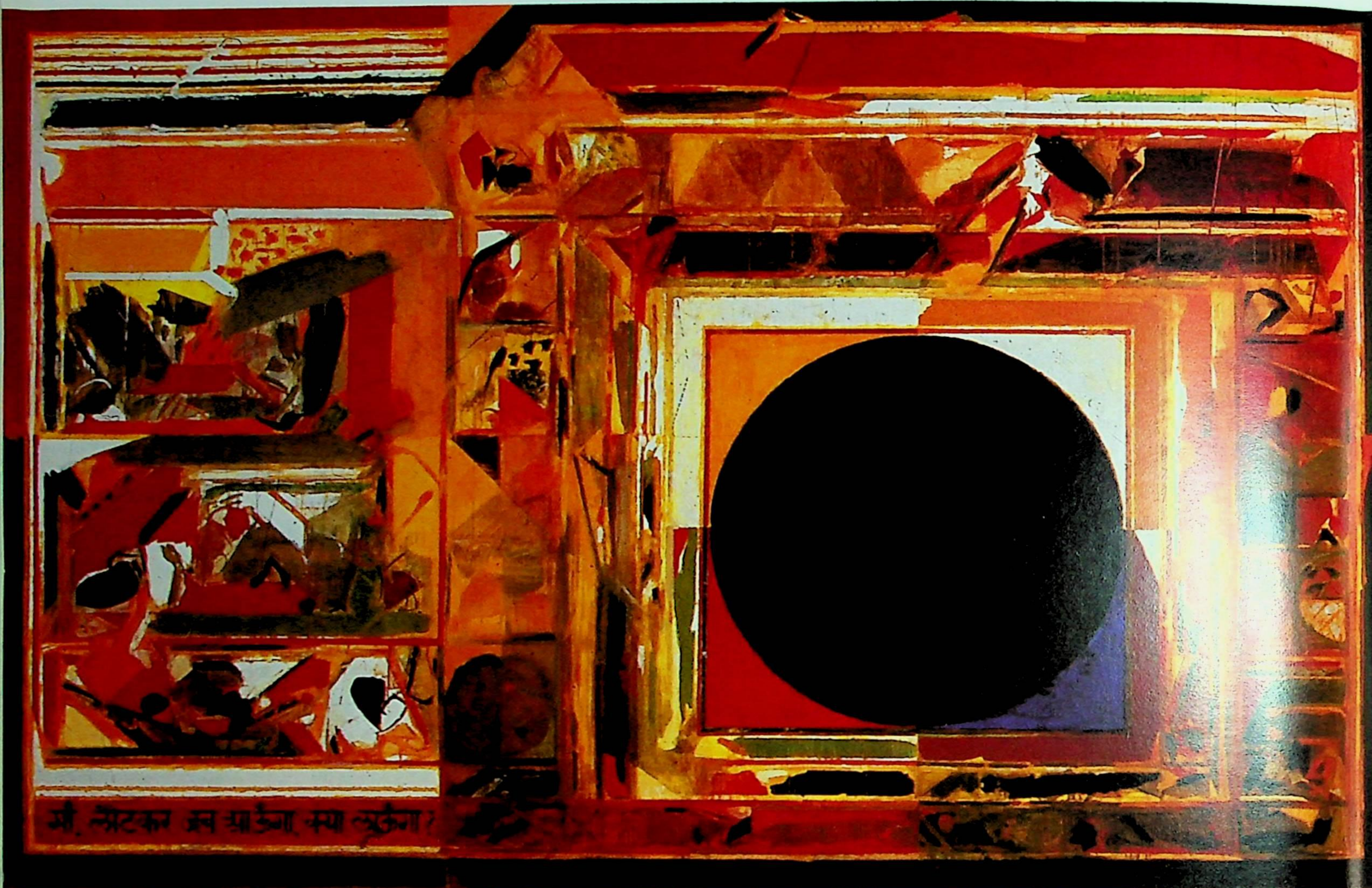
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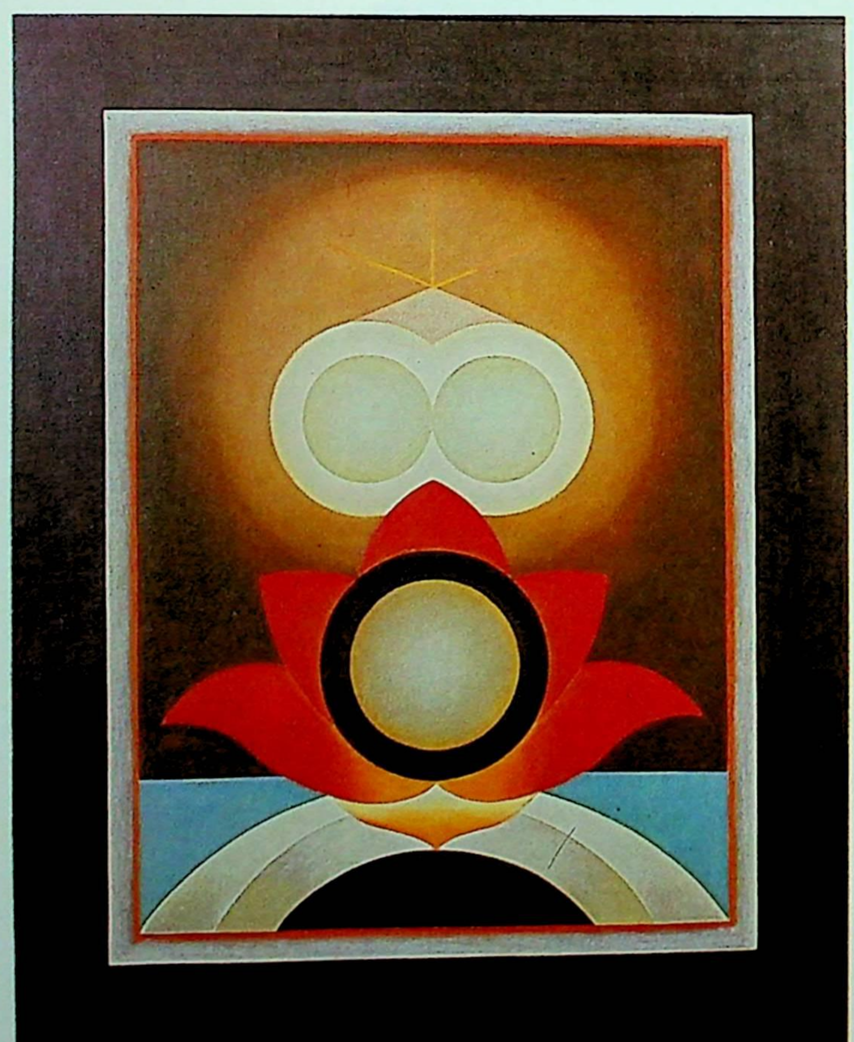
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9 Ma (1981)
S.H. Raza; Acrylic on canvas; 260 x 175 cms.
Collection: The Artist, Paris

10. "________________" (1979); G.R. Santosh
Oil on canvas; 101.5 x 127 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New Delhi



11 ***Dwanivimb C*** (1973)
J. Swaminathan; Oil on canvas; 124 x 124 cms.
National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

12 Cows with Krishna (1981); Manjeet Bawa
Oil on canvas; 152 x 122 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New Delhi



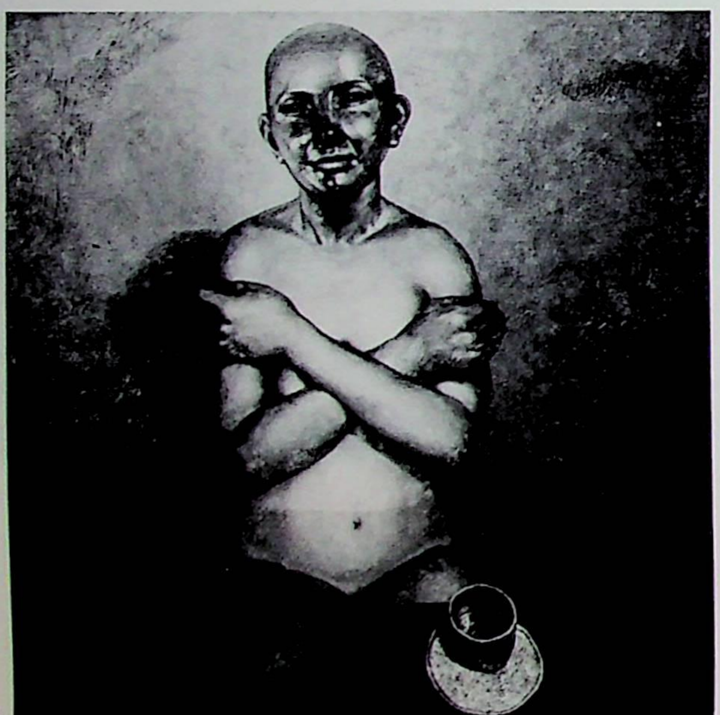
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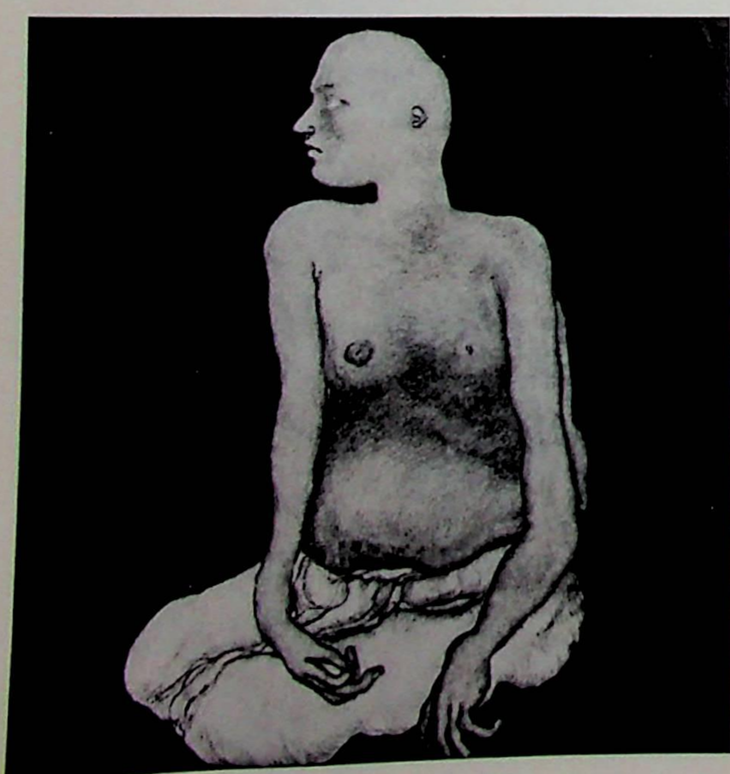
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Graphic Artists: Laxma Goud, Anupam Sud.
Sculptors: K. G. Subramanyan, Himmat Shah, Mrinalini Mukherjee, Ved Nayar, Dhruva Mistry.

Right from the start two things were considered as improtant as the actual exposition and planned for meticulously. The first was the catalogue and related publications. We all acknowledge that world art comes to us in print—exhibitions in particular are most valued for the illustrated documents that accompany them—and yet we have been negligent about contemporary art publications in India. This 100-page catalogue, with a text and 70 illustrations (22 in colour), should prove our professional capabilities in the matter. As for the distribution, we made sure that, apart from Britain, a selection of artists and art critics in Europe and the U.S.A. should receive the catalogue by post. In addition, an illustrated publicity folder had been posted a month in advance of the exhibition to a carefully compiled list of 1000 names, and two full-colour posters were sent to about 700 institutions in Britain.

The second consideration was to back the exhibition with ideas, issues, polemics. Visitors to India are invariably struck by the level of awareness among Indian artists (about their own preoccupations as well as about the international situation, and the ideology thereof) and even at times place this a notch higher than the actual work produced! Be that as it may, we felt that in London, where a hundred exhibitions might open every week, an Indian show could simply come and go even if, and especially if, it was part of the grand Festival of India. Therefore, to reinforce the event a formal lecture programme for the visiting Indian artists and critics was planned for us by Gulam mohammed Sheikh. And, in addition to the two quite spectacular inaugural receptions (with the Earl of Harewood and Sir Hugh Casson as the guests of honour) to which four to five hundred people came, a chain of social gatherings was arranged during the course of the exhibition. To this English artists, art critics and historians were selectively invited to meet with the Indian critics and artists present.

Lectures by Indian artists and critics were organised at the Victoria and Albert Museum; the Tate Gallery; Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; the Serpentine Gallery; and the Slade School. Symposia were held at the Riverside Studios, the Royal College of Art and the Ruskin School of Drawing and Painting, Oxford. In the lecture programme, British art historians of repute—Phillip Rawson, Richard Lannoy, and Timothy Hyman—also participated. In addition, invitations kept cropping up to give slide lectures at various art schools and we covered nearly ten art schools all over Britain including Scotland. Beside the normal stream of visitors, the number of art students who came to the show was in consequence very large. Several scholars and critics of repute also visited the exhibition.

I should like in conclusion to recapture some of the responses evoked in discussions and in more personal dialogues. To begin with the more critical positions. There was an occasional expression of irritation that the first show took the viewer through too many varied works. There is some justification for this comment. But the reluctance to actually pay attention and make an acquaintance with the works was expressed in a ruder fashion by those other critics who dismissed the show for being a hodge-podge imitation of Western modes, especially the School of Paris. We have of course heard this repeated somewhat mindlessly for three decades, and we know that taken at a grosser level this would drag a lot of British art into the areas of imitation as well—of the French or American modes. But if a finer distinction is in fact being made, between belonging and imitation, then the argument must proceed more carefully, and this came through as a kind of discomfiture in the tone of certain of the critics (made more acute by the fact that the introduction in the catalogue anticipated their problems) about whether their very expectations and criteria were somewhat misconceived.

The more considered comments sought to sift the works and mark specific areas of preference. The *celebrative* nature of

some of the works in the first part was especially noted, for example, and its relationship, through the common factor of lyricism, to the quiet, meditative aspect of Indian abstract art. In contrast, the grand, emblematic, frieze-like figuration in the first part of the show was recognised. And of course the erotic-symbolic idiom of certain other works was remarked on, this still being associated by many with the "essential" Indian sensibility. Some people commented that they liked the sculpture in the first part better than the paintings, finding it, partly on account of that very same erotic-symbolic element, more Indian. When the artists spoke about the works, the dialogue was keen and precise. They would discuss, for example, the possibility of using certain spatial devices to give a mystical dimension to the painting; or the problem of "edge" between colour-shapes in semi-figurative paintings; and the validity of combining occult symbols with alien conventions of design and painterliness.

The second show, including for the most part figurative-narrative works (ranging from the more playful to the more directly social), elicited a more consistent response. Except for those who have an *a priori* dislike of this genre — and these people found the works predictable in their social realist descriptiveness — there was a real sense of engagement with the positions taken. An art historian of great sensibility said, for instance, that he was moved by the rare quality of moral conviction presented in so direct and unabashed a way. In the same line of thought it was also said that the force of subject-matter seemed to necessitate wide-ranging stylistic choices whereby the artists seem to weave in and out of Western art history with confidence. With the artists once again there were detailed conversations about the unexpected use of colour in what are ostensibly realist paintings; the disposition of figures on a non-naturalist principle, the better to unfold a story or event; the curious fusion of reality and fantasy or, more precisely, the drawing out of magic metaphors from descriptive details — aspects which make the painting significatly Indian *apart* from their subject-matter.

On such occasions the fact of this being an Indian exhibition, a national manifestation, so to speak, was respected and then forgotten. It became a dialogue about *vision* and *language* as such, without worry or irritation about the correct ethnic or ideological criteria. Such dialogues do of course take place between individuals from different countries; but our complaint that an equal regard has been absent from the Western gaze when it looks at *expositions* from a culture outside its own can be said to have been overcome. I would venture to say that this is the first step towards the possibility of the intervention I spoke about at the very start.

Geeta Kapur



16

13 Man with a Red Scarf (1980)
Bhupen Khakar; Oil on canvas; 58.4 x 63.5 cms.; Collection: Geeta Kapur, New Delhi

14 Ceremony (1976)
Bikash Bhattacharjee; Oil on canvas; 88 x 88 cms.; Collection: Francis Wacziarg, New Delhi

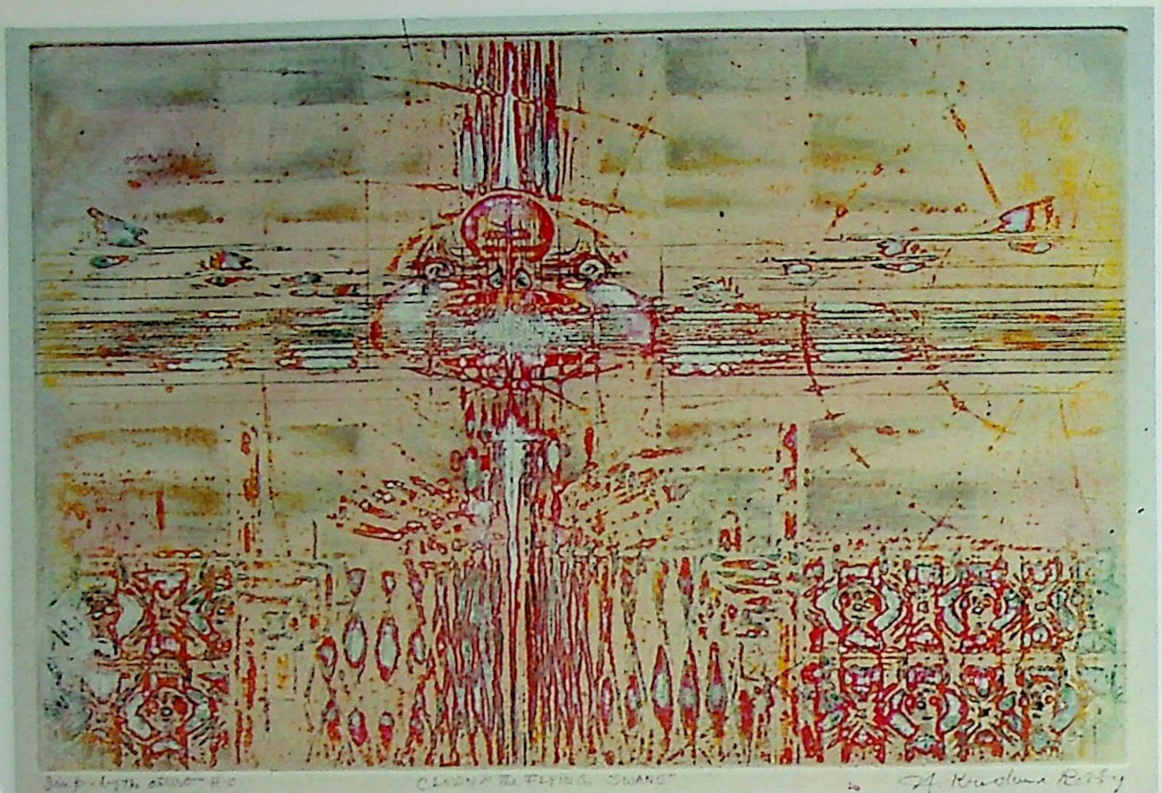
15 Man Sitting on the Floor (1981)
Jogen Chowdhury; Ink and pastel on paper; 52 x 52 cms.; Collection: Vivan Sundaram, New Delhi

16 His Life II
Nalini Malani; Oil on canvas; 152 x 122 cms.; Pundole Gallery, Bombay

17 Untitled (1981)
Laxma Goud; Zinc etching; 50.2 x 66 cms.; Collection: The Artist, Hyderabad



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18 The Clown and the Flying Swans (1980)
Krishna Reddy
Colour engraving; 50.8 x 35.6 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New York

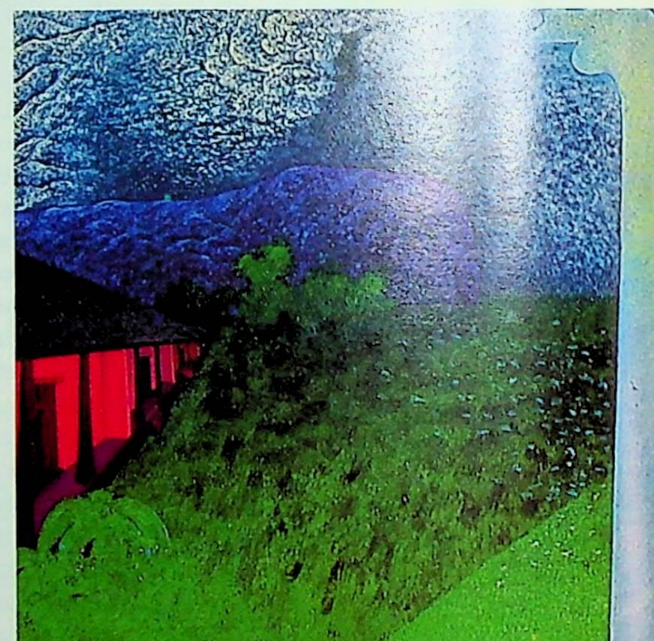
19 Speaking Street (1981)
Gulam mohammed Sheikh
Oil on canvas; 103 x 123.2 cms.
Roopankar, Museum of Fine Arts, Bhopal

20 Portrait of Father (1980)
Vivan Sundaram
Oil on canvas; 82 x 183 cms.
National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

21 Untitled (1977)
Arpita Singh
Ink and water-colour; 56 x 71 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New Delhi

22 Windows II (1975)
Anupam Sud
Etching; 78.7 x 64 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New Delhi

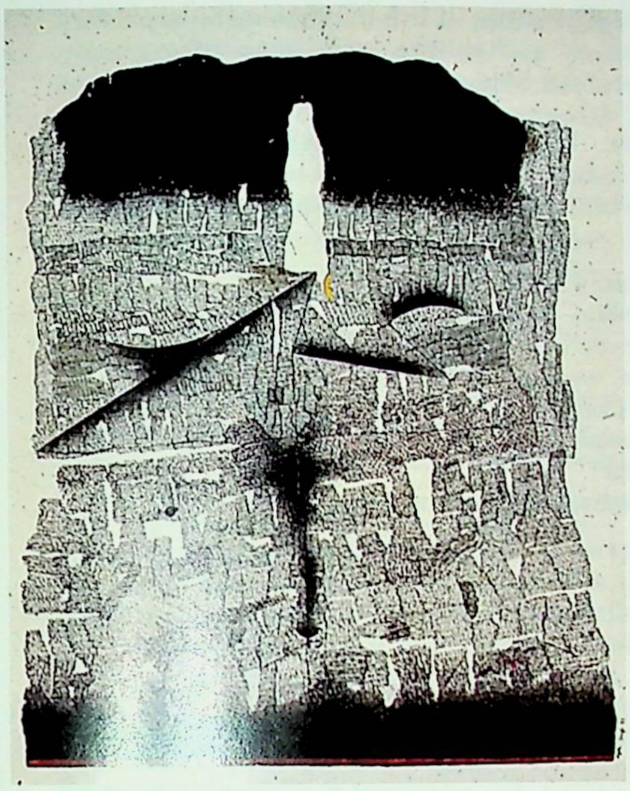
23 Untitled (1981)
Ranbir Singh Kaleka
Oil on canvas; 153.7 x 108 cms.
Collection: The Artist, New Delhi

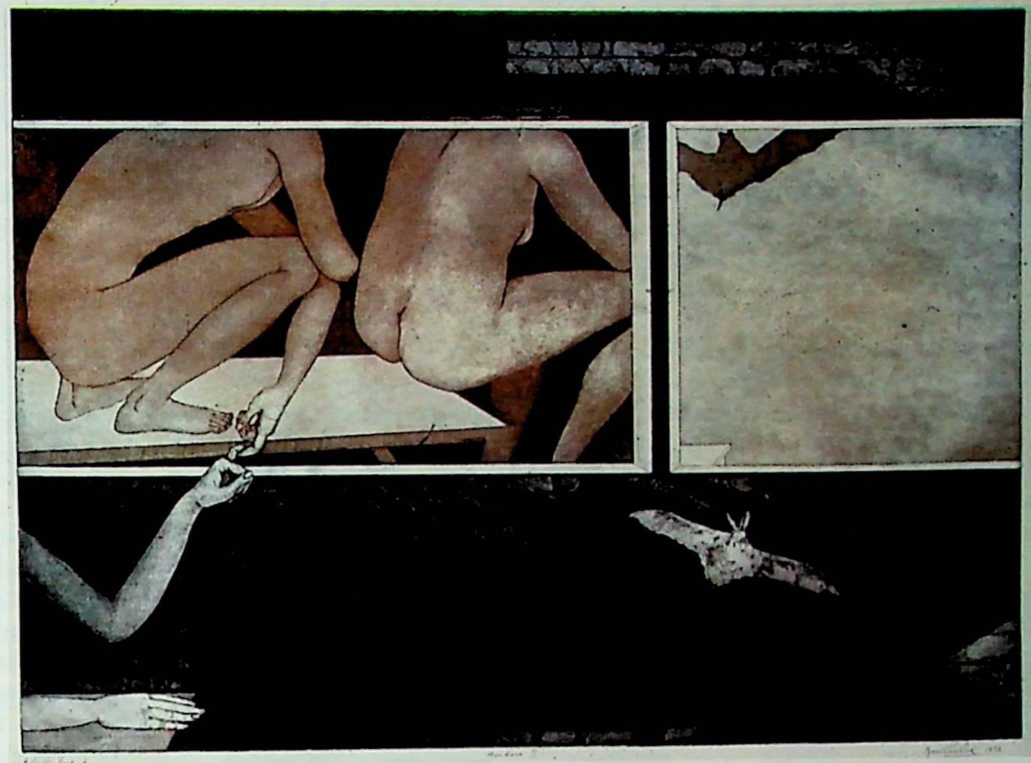


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INDIAN ART AT OXFORD

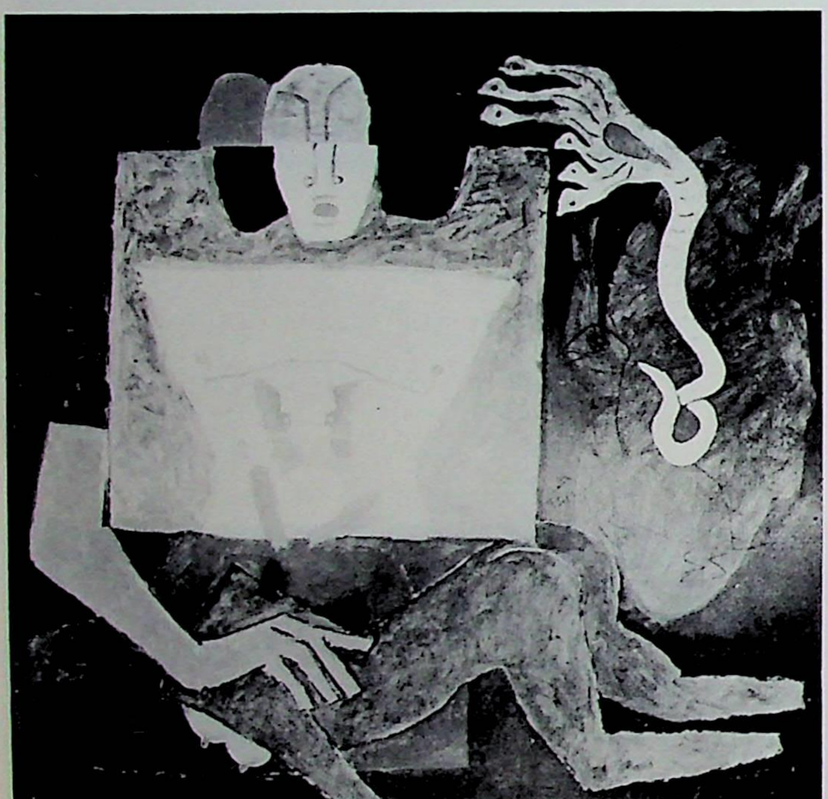
From May to July 1982, a series of five exhibitions on aspects of contemporary Indian art and culture, with supporting events, was held at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford. The programme focused on popular art, ritual, fine art, film and photography in present-day India. The concepts of myth and reality are often indivisible in India; yet there remains in this ambiguity a tension and irony which lies at the root of much contemporary creative expression.

The five major events were:
India: myth and reality—aspects of modern Indian art
The Other India: seven contemporary photographers
Gods of the Byways: wayside shrines of
Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat
The Indian Film Posters
Calendar Art in India
There was also a Festival of Films on India.

While the basic purpose of this exhibition series was to project the India of today as reflected in some of its art forms, it strove at the same time to demonstrate that Indian talent in these fields is alive to painful, topical issues; that it gathers strength from, or by opposition to, the vast hinterland of traditional arts; that it is original, self-questioning, probing, neither imitative of nor subservient to the West. Certainly India has more than its fair share of economic, social and political ills. But those very problems have generated a vitality in thinking and feeling in the creative arts which this series of exhibitions managed, we hope, to communicate, and of which India has good reason to be proud. Such exhibitions are not so much celebration as self-appraisal.

Such success as the series of exhibitions achieved was due in large measure to the devotion and zeal of the Museum's brilliant young Director, David Elliott, who made extensive tours of India on two occasions to get the feel of the country and understand its culture. His dedicated staff were a delight to work with.

Victor Musgrave, a fine organiser, spared no effort to acquire a superb collection of works from private and public sources in England, and to help us with his mature discernment.





India: myth & reality — aspects of modern Indian art

The enormous exhibition of contemporary Indian art occupied the entire museum for a period of six weeks. The opening drew an audience of over five hundred persons, most of whom had come from London, having braved torrential rains and a railway strike. The presence of several of the artists at the vernissage made it an exciting occasion: Francis Newton Souza and Mohan Samant from New York; M.F. Husain, Gieve Patel and Mrinalini Mukherjee from India; Anish Kapoor from London. K.G. Subramanyan followed a little later. This was by all accounts the most cohesive and powerful presentation of contemporary Indian art hitherto in the West.

With the exception of the sculpture of young Anish Kapoor, who has now settled in England, and the weavings of Mrinalini

1 *Mandala* (1976); M. F. Husain; Acrylic on canvas; 124 x 127 cms. Chester Herwitz Family Collection

2 **Paintings by M. F. Husain at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford** (The one on the floor was painted on the spot before a large audience)

Mukherjee, the exhibition was confined to painting. In order to clarify certain preoccupations which are found reflected in Indian art today, the works were grouped under the following headings:—

The hinterland of myth: Indian and Christian—Souza, Husain, Gujral

Nature as pictorial metaphor: forest, mountain, river—Raza, Ram Kumar, Padamsee

The dislocated persona—Mohan Samant, Tyeb Mehta, K. G. Subramanyan

Social satire and political protest—Krishen Khanna, Bikash Bhattacharjee, A. Ramachandran, Jogen Chowdhury, Rameshwar Broota, R.S. Kaleka

The urban scene: strangers in the city—Gieve Patel, Sudhir Patwardhan

Ebrahim Alkazi

the other India
seven contemporary photographers

The changes taking place within Indian society since Independence were also apparent in "The Other India" which projected the work of seven photographers. Jyoti Bhatt and Raghav Kaneria documented the anonymous artists and architects of rural India, where ritual weaves life and art into an inextricable pattern. In contrast, Mitter Bedi captured the solitariness and bafflement of village folk swept by circumstance into the cold, inhuman efficiency of the industrial age. T.S. Nagarajan infiltrated into homes in South India, where the traditional, the colonial and the contemporary settle into an uneasy, ironic co-existence. Foy Nissen's quiet lyricism seized the solitary moment in the midst of bustle, the sequestered corner in public places. Dasharath Patel's eye was enthralled by the abstract pictorial designs into which commonplace objects and events form themselves, e.g. dyed garments in a river estuary or bangle and hardware stalls, and equally by the bizarre posters and paintings of circus performers. Pablo Bartholomew, the youngest, dredged the loneliness and misery of social outcasts—film extras, eunuchs, transvestites, opium addicts, junkies from the West, characters from the seamy underworld of Bombay—the flotsam and jetsam of humanity washed ashore by a cruel, indifferent metropolis.

Ebrahim Alkazi

3 Artist and make-up woman, Pablo Bartholomew, Lucknow, (1978)



Gods of the Byways

Wayside shrines of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

The exhibition of wayside shrines was put together by E. Alkazi, Uma Anand and Komal Kothari with additional material from the private collection of Haku Shah. Designed by Satish Sud, the exhibition evoked the rich complexity of folk and tribal religion in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh through a series of tableaus centred on two and three dimensional images of the principal gods, goddesses, spirit-beings and mythologised folk heroes of village tradition. Each image was appropriately complemented by a display of associated ritual paraphernalia. This supplemented unobtrusive information panels and Vivek Anand's outstanding photographs as a necessary reminder that

4. View of the exhibition: *Snake Shrine* dedicated to the local hero-deity Tejaji in South Rajasthan. Carved wood *Ancestor Shrine* in background



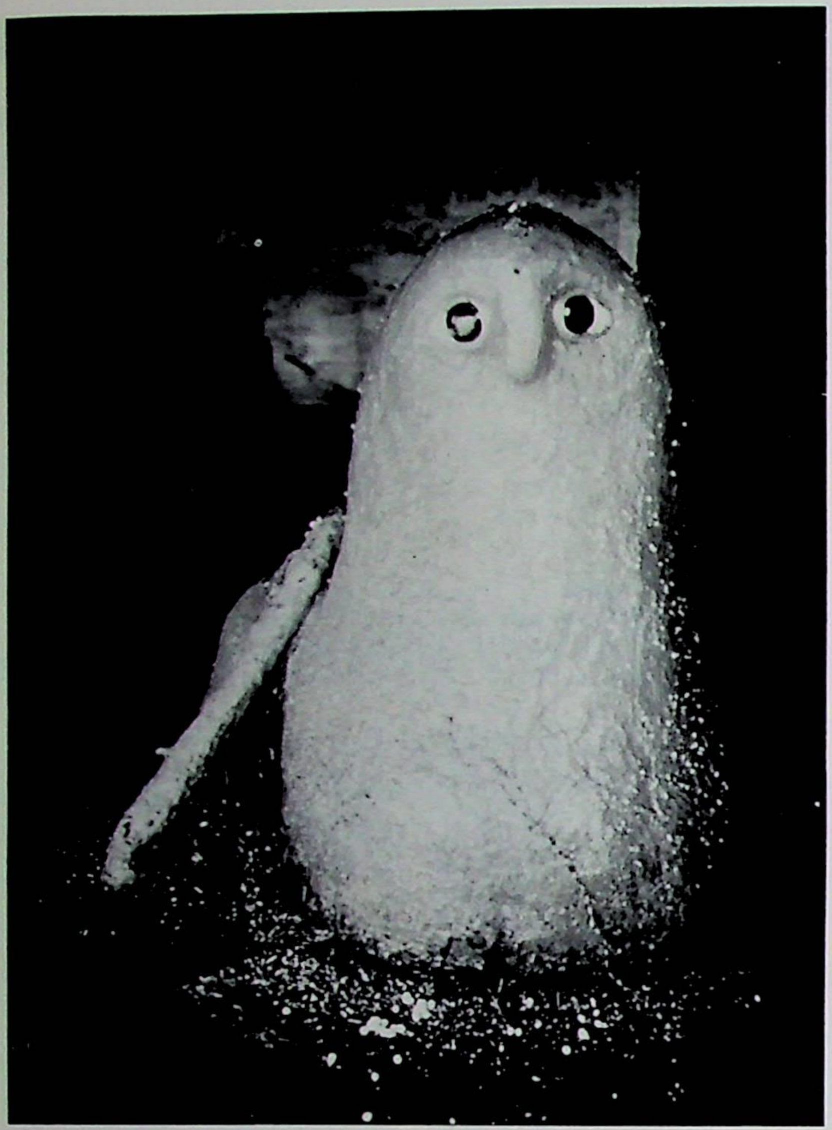
what we were seeing was not a form of art which happens to take supernatural themes as its subject but merely the visual component of a multi-media system of activity which is of a piece with daily life. Further background was provided in the excellent accompanying catalogue, with contributions from Komal Kothari, Stephen Fuchs, Haku Shah and Jyotindra Jain.

While the exhibition had the merit of demonstrating that the richness of cultural tradition could not be confined to the neat categories of art or religion, it was predictably the objects themselves which gave the visitor the most enduring impression of the scope of the sacred in rural life. The stylised ancestor figures and equestrian folk heroes of the *Gatha* stone tablets from Madhya Pradesh, for instance, had an immediate appeal for those familiar with the phased abstractions of twentieth-century European "high" art; but it was above all in the innovative recourse to new materials and forms, generating a repertoire almost totally unfamiliar to a Western audience, that the true virility of these traditions asserted itself. The adornments on shrines to Dev Narayan and the recumbent image of Iloji, complete with painted wrist watch, stuck firmly in the mind.

Brian Durrans

5. View of the exhibition: Tree Shrine to the Mother-goddess in the foreground with the *Padh* (painted scroll) to Dev Narayan, a mobile shrine, in the background. The *Jantar* (stringed instrument with two gourds) played by the ballad-singer is placed in front of the *Padh*





6. Indergah Mataji (a fertility goddess)
Indergah, Bundi

7. View of the exhibition: back gallery to middle gallery



The Indian Film Posters

"The Indian Film Posters" exhibition covered a wide range of graphic expression: from the strident melodrama of the commercial Hindi movie to the chaste sobriety and studied purposefulness of the new wave.

Calendar Art in India

The religious Calendar is the most widespread expression of popular art in India. Based on the late nineteenth century European chromolithograph the artists who have designed these calendars have evolved their own interpretations of the Hindu Gods. These are bought by even the poorest of families. The Calendars show a synthesis of eastern and western styles and techniques. As ever the result is inimitably Indian.

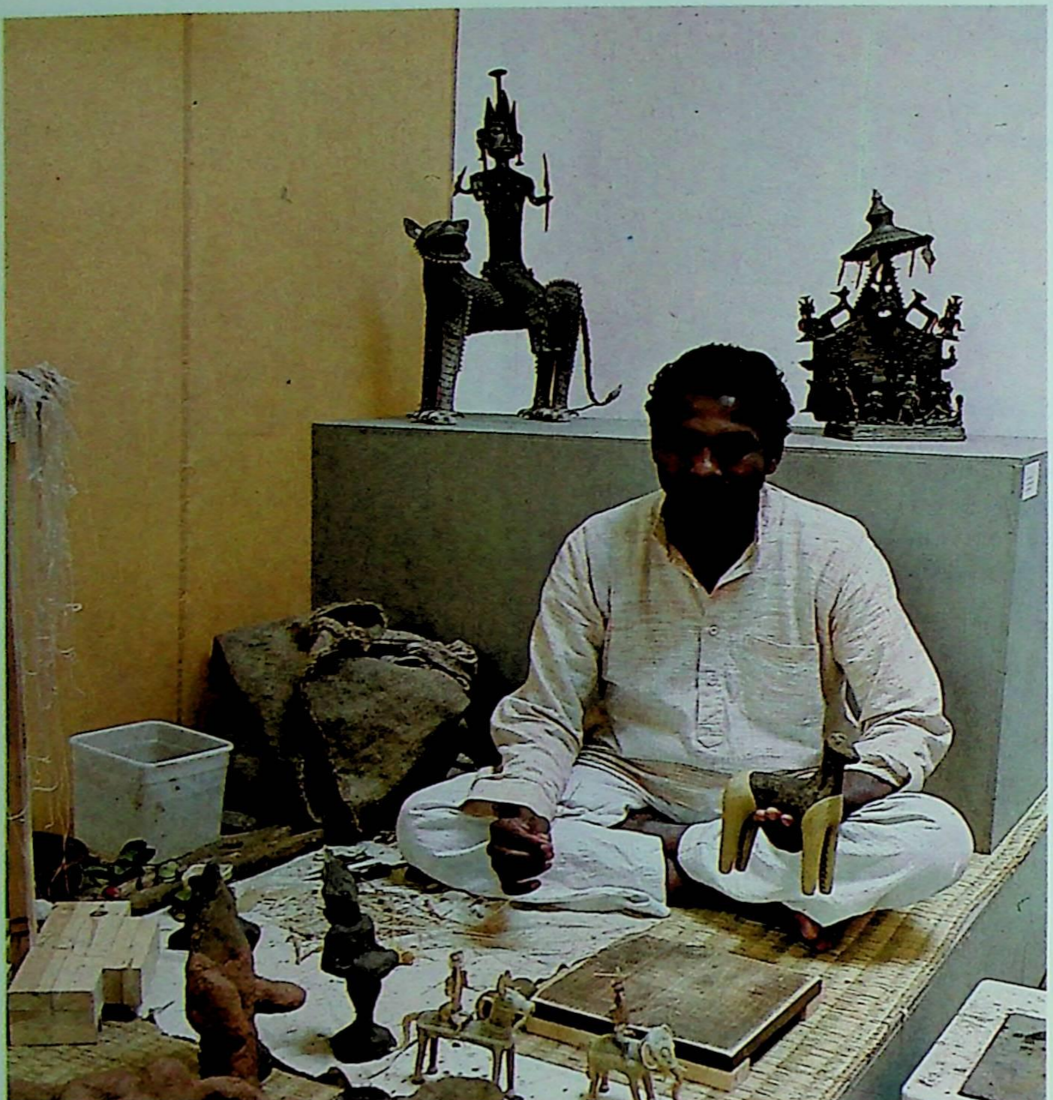
Ebrahim Alkazi



8 South Idols
Indian film posters from the 1950s to the present

9 Sarasvati, Lakshmi and Ganesha
The Indian Calendar





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The Living Arts of INDIA

Craftsmen at Work

The handicrafts of India of today are directly descended from the arts of at least 5,000 years ago . . . They are not merely enjoyable works of art, but contain the intelligible vestiges of man's original vision.

— Ananda Coomaraswamy



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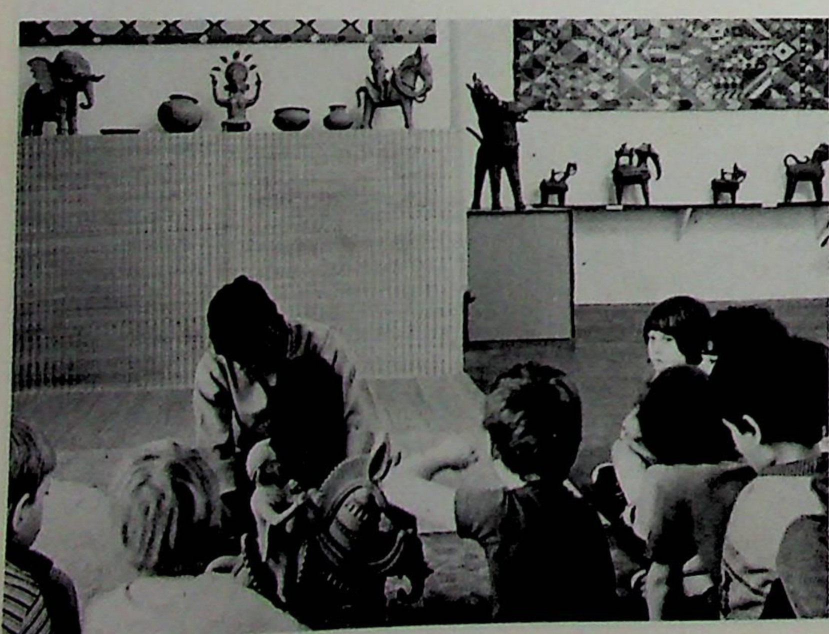
The "living arts" in India are the expression of a whole way of life, a whole philosophy of tolerance, acceptance, hope and devotion. The housewife paints patterns on her walls and doorstep which are both a prayer and a welcome; the pots and baskets that she handles daily are beautiful in the way they both fit their function and bear the mark of the craftsman's skill. The flame that lights a household shrine makes the same oasis of calm in a dark room whether the image of the deity is made of bronze or of clay; prayers of supplication or gratitude, for a rich harvest or the cure of an illness or the birth of a child, are given material expression in the form of garlands of flowers or especially commissioned votive figures. Public festivals require the skills of many craftsmen, new for every familiar occasion. There are in India today hundreds of master craftsmen whose work is as good as any produced in the past.

1 Jaidev Baghel
2 Gulab Chand
3 Tejiben Makwana





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The Concept

The continuity of the traditional arts and crafts in India, which still offer creative expression to the great mass of our people, it was felt, is a phenomenon which must find a special place in any meaningful festival of Indian arts.

The Exhibition of the Living Arts of India was conceived in 1980: it was to portray a living vibrant scene of art and craft activity, where visitors could watch the emerging shapes and forms, meet the craftsmen and grasp how in India the aesthetic sense always merges with the symbolic meaning.

The selection of craftsmen and exhibits was made in such a way that their demonstrations would convey the continuity between the past and the present, and give the visitors an understanding of the roots of Indian society. The craftsmen invited to participate in the Exhibition not only represented the best skills and techniques in the country but also demonstrated how, within the framework of forms and images which are inherited through centuries of tradition, they add to their work their own unique touch and give it vitality.

The traditional discipline gives the craftsmen a base from which he can experiment with confidence and derive inner satisfaction. It is the kind of satisfaction which is inbuilt in Indian classical music, where a master musician can find joy and freedom of expression within the notes to be used for each *raga*. Each rendering is different and beautiful according to the learning and absorption of the artist in his composition. The Indian artist-craftsman, similarly, uses his medium to play or sing his own *ragas,* so to speak, finding his own freedom of joyous expression.

The amazing range and variety of skills, materials and styles that exist in the country and the joy with which Indians carve, chisel, paint, weave and mould forms impart a vitality to the scene on one side. On the other side, there is the movement for mass production, copying and other soul-killing occupations, in the name of development. Economic necessity forces a large number of Indian craft people to take to repetitively produced products which cater to market demand both at home and abroad.

Yet, by and large, it is the craft activity woven into the texture of the Indian way of life that brings out the Indian identity. The celebrations of seasons, festivals and harvests, and the need to create beauty and tranquillity around the home, are never frivolous or materialistic in mood but linked with ideas, aspirations and the whole philosophy of life of the people. Items of daily use, utensils, containers, baskets, toys, costumes and jewellery are made to suit function and convey delight and to reject the monotony of routine existence. The concern of the Living Arts exhibition was to project this vibrant scene.

The artist-craftsmen, coming from backgrounds as far apart as Nagaland and Gujarat or Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, had one common inheritance: they were all brought up in the teacher-pupil tradition (*guru-shishya parampara*). They had all grown up in an environment where, under the loving care of the *guru,* they learnt to craft much as they learnt to walk and talk. On joining the family workshop, they learnt to confront problems which were real. Their own personalities unfolded as they learnt to take more and more responsibility. Somewhere along the way they learnt that they had to master the technique, and yet go beyond it. And that is where the creative process begins.

4 Vithal Das Sharma
5. Gulab Chand

Jaidev Baghel
Bell-metal craftsman from Bastar District, Madhya Pradesh, born 1949
In the Bastar tribal area of Madhya Pradesh where I belong, art and craft are a part of our life. We Ghadwas have been practising the traditional *dhokra* or lost-wax art for many centuries. We have a special technique which is passed on from generation to generation. Nobody knows when it started.

There is a legend that in prehistoric days, when the first Ghadwa was roaming in the forest hunting for food, he came across a strange thing in a scorched jungle—some curious shapes of the metal. When he looked closely, he saw that in the heat of the forest fire, molten metal had poured into the grooves of a beehive where the wax had melted. This was the natural metal-casting method which the first Ghadwa learned. Then he made shapes and figures of his own. To start with, it was the shape of Mother Goddess that he needed for his worship. Later many other tribal deities were added, each suited to the ritual of a particular community.

The makers of these images (*murtis*) in the Ghadwa medium became recognised artists and were respected by the whole community. They were invited to neighbouring villages to install special *murtis* and were entertained by the whole community for five or six days.

Except for the traditional training in *dhokra* craft that I received from my father in a natural and gradual way, I had no other education.

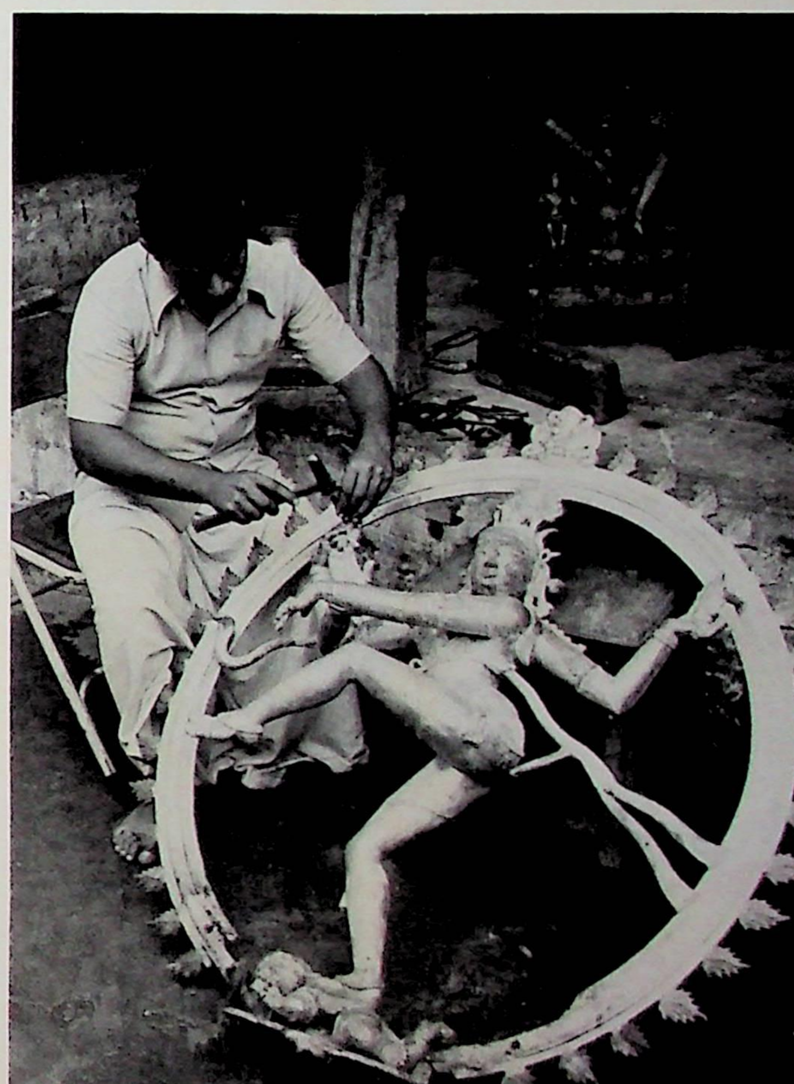
Gulab Chand
Potter from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, born 1955
I spent my childhood among my people, all of whom handled clay and made interesting shapes out of it. There was my father, and his elder brother Sukhraj and his wife, who jointly won the National Award for Craftsmen back in 1958, and his younger brother who won the same award later. Their fingers could mould magic forms which fascinated me. My three brothers and Sukhraj's son joined this community activity, and we all felt we had a special contribution to make. I don't remember when I started to learn their skill, it all happened so naturally. Clay was my plaything, the potter's skills were my games.

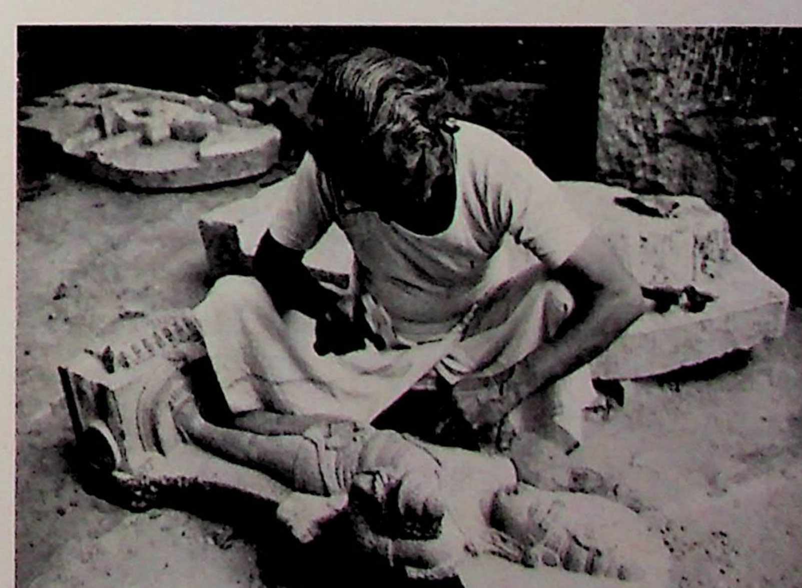
In the old days our community made huge clay pots for storage, and images for homes and temples. Most villages have a potter who makes household utensils, but even now there are perhaps two thousand villagers within forty kilometres all around who still come to us for images at festival times. Sometimes it takes people two days to come and return by horse or bullock-cart.

Tejiben Makwana
Embroiderer from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, born 1945
In our part of the world, stretching from Sindh, which is now in Pakistan, to Kutch and Saurashtra in Gujarat, each tribe and community has its own style of embroidery for decorating its clothes and houses. We like to decorate the entrance to our homes with door hangings (*torans*), the curtains that cover our bedding during the day, our cushions, the hammocks in which we rock our babies, and, of course, everything we wear. I think it is because we live in a dry country with so little colour in it that we love to dress in bright colours and fill our houses with patterns of trees and flowers and birds. We use mirrors in our embroidery perhaps to remind us of water, like the mirages we see far off; and at night they catch the light of our lamps and fill our sandy world with movement, reflecting the colours we have put there.

I do not remember when I started embroidering. My mother must have taught me the basic stitches, but I learned patchwork by myself and made up my own figures and patterns.


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6 Rabin Malakar
7 Krishnamurthy Kamraj
8 Devalakunda Vadiraj
9 Ajin Alodi Kamei



Ajin Alodi Kamei
Weaver from Dimapur, Nagaland, born 1945
I was born into a well-known family of the Rongmei tribe in west Manipur. Scholars say our tribe has lived here for over four thousand years and came from farther to the south-east. In Duilon village there were five hundred families; my grandfather was a friend of the Maharaja of Manipur and had a big house where important celebrations were held. Each festival had its particular dances. The women always wove the cloth for their own families, and each festival dance required a special dress. We all learned to weave as soon as we were big enough to manage the loom; our mothers taught us.

My father was converted to Christianity along with about three-quarters of our tribe. When we became Christian, almost none of the cultural dresses for festival dances and the special shawls for warriors were used any longer, so they are not available now.

In 1976 I decided to start a weaving unit, to revive and improve that part of our culture while we remember it, also to help our economic condition.

Vithal Das Sharma
Pichhawai painter from Nathdwara, Rajasthan, born 1939
Our family goes back to Shri Pitha, who arrived at the Nathdwara temple near Udaipur in A.D. 1705 to paint the cloth hangings that make beautiful backgrounds (*pichhawai* means "back of") for the image of our Lord Krishna, here called Shrinathji.

There are ceremonies and festivals for each season, which we celebrate regularly at the temple, and our paintings are made to capture the mood of the season or of the special occasion. Paintings of lotus ponds and dense forests and water sports give Shrinathji a cool environment during hot summer days. For the monsoon season there are paintings of the joyous dance of the peacocks under cloudy skies. In winter we hang jewelled velvets and brocade *pichhawais.* Our paintings always try to catch the spirit of the season, and our effort is to serve Shrinathji by making works of art which please Him and express the love of His devotees.

Rabin Malakar
Pith craftsman from Burdwan, West Bengal, born 1939
My grandfather was a respected member of our community. I love to remember how we all used to collect the *shola* or pith of a reed that grows under the water in ponds. Our favourite pond was about twenty-five kilometres from our village. After our journey by bullock-cart, we waded in the water, looking for thick reeds which can be recognised only by the shallow layer of leaves that grow above the water level. We spent the whole day collecting them and the next day drying them. They must be completely dry before they can be shaved and shaped.

I played with *shola* and naturally learned how to use it. I made my first independent work when I was ten years old, an image of the goddess Saraswati for a children's group, without my elders knowing it.

I was unhappy as a child, and even now I cannot express in my everyday work what I would like to; but sometimes I do feel that I have been able to express my love for the Mother Goddess with my hands, and I sit at peace before the image I have made, feeling that she has blessed me.

M. V. Lakshmanan
Bronze-caster from Kerala, born 1945
My father Shri M. V. Kunhiraman was a well-known goldsmith in our village, Pappinissary (Cannanore District, Kerala). While my brothers still continue to follow my father, I became a disciple of my maternal grandfather, who was a traditional bronze-maker. I learnt to make old-style bronzes and silver and gold icons for worship. My early childhood was in an environment where excellence of form and skill were considered very important. Although we made the same images of deities, we always put a bit of ourselves into the form and shape of the wax model. Later I received formal education from the National Award winner Shri G. Bhashyam Stapathi. Under his guidance, I learnt the finer aspects of this art and was awarded the National Award in 1980.

Devalankunda Vadiraj
Sculptor from Bangalore, Karnataka, born 1920
I was born into a family of temple priests who have been the hereditary guardians and teachers of our religious learning, both oral and written—the *Vedas, Puranas* and *Shastras*—and in charge of temple worship. My childhood was spent in the precincts of the Vishnu temple in Devalankunda, Karnataka, where the Vishnu icon was a source of great delight to me. My elders recited the scripture verses and told stories about the deities and their struggle against evil. I grew up learning about many deities whose icons I had seen, and many I had not seen. My *gurus* taught me carving on stone, wood and ivory. I continued my studies by travelling and comparing the different schools of stone sculpture—Chola and Pallava in granite, Chalukya in sandstone, Hoysala in soapstone—always looking, and seeking my own style and identity within the traditional discipline.

Gurappa Chetty
Cloth painter from Shrikalahasti, Andhra Pradesh, born 1937
As a child, I remember watching my father make free-hand drawings on large scrolls. It fascinated me to see beautiful figures of gods and goddesses emerge, as he related with his pen the stories of the *Ramayana,* the *Mahabharata* and Puranic legends. These eloquent pictures and bold movements had the same effect on me as the story recitals (*kathas*), which I loved to hear. I am sure the tradition of Kalahasti *kalamkaris* or pen-work cloth patterns is derived from the ancient folk-recital scrolls. I was about thirteen years old when my father gave me a brush and asked me to fill in his black outline drawings with alum for the red colour. At the same time he initiated me into reading our Telegu literature, so that I could find my own inspiration from our ancient stories and thus seek a creative expression of my own.

Traditionally these cloth *kalamkaris* were used as screens on the chariots (*rathas*) which were taken in procession on festivals or were hung on the corridor walls of the temples.

I read a lot, and what I enjoy most is to interpret the themes which inspire me in my own way. I try to add my own feelings in my work. I also like to experiment with different colours and designs.

Swatantrata Prakash

The Living Crafts

Driving across the centre of London the other day, I got, of course, stuck in a traffic jam. As the exhaust fumes got thicker, and tempers got shorter, I calmed myself by remembering two widely contrasting delays I had sat through in the previous few months. One was caused by a farmer herding his cows home for milking along a narrow Welsh lane. I waited with total, and atypical, patience. I was on holiday; cows cannot be hurried; what was the rush? Six months later, in the heart of Delhi, I sat in an auto-rickshaw, again with surprising coolness, while around me a traffic jam as impenetrable as any in London slowly sorted itself out. What was the rush?

There was, I realised, another totally unexpected link in my mind between Wales and India. In Wales I had been surprised, and at first rather intrigued, by the way so many cottages, barns and neighbourhood shops had been turned into "crafts centres". Many people, not all of them young, disliking standardisation, believing that "small is beautiful", had left their towns, their factories and their offices to set up little workshops. In these, they made pottery, furniture, leather goods, jewellery, knitted clothes and, most of all, it seemed, multi-coloured wax candles. In India too, we saw plenty of crafts everywhere. As the Arts Council puts it: For the visitor to India, there is one enthralling – and free – exhibition which virtually never closes. Daily, in full view of prospective buyers and users, men and women work by the roadside, in narrow shop fronts and backyards, in the precincts of temples, to fashion beautiful ritual and household objects from the humblest materials.

You really do see it everywhere. In cities, in villages, in the tourist triangle – Delhi, Agra, Jaipur – and in the deep south, where few tourists penetrate, craftsmanship is omnipresent in the enormous patchwork of peoples, cultures and landscapes that is India. Sometimes it seems a more cohesive element than language itself, for India has many different languages.

But, despite the omnipresence of handicrafts in both Wales and India, there is little similarity between them. In Wales, the indigenous crafts, like building the celebrated fisherman's coracle, are dying, or already a long time dead. The artefacts pressed on the holiday shoppers are new ones; sometimes quite attractive, often technically skilled, but not altogether genuine. They are fashionable, not to say trendy, and perhaps none the worse for that. Those who make them are often newcomers to the community, and to their trade. What they are doing is in no sense the present-day manifestation of an ancient tradition.

Yet that is exactly what crafts are in India, even today. When you watch a potter from Gujarat, or Uttar Pradesh, making a humble vessel for cooking or storing food, or taking time off from that to make votive figures, you are seeing the continuation of a tradition that is no less than five thousand years old. He and his ancestors have been rooted in their home communities for generations. Over the centuries, rulers have come and gone; religions been adopted and abandoned; wars lost and won. Handicrafts and their practice have provided one thread of continuity. There is a charming Indian legend to explain how pottery, the oldest, simplest and most ubiquitous of handicrafts, came into being. In the dawn of time, the demi-gods and the titans (*devas* and *asuras*) churned the primal ocean in order to extract nectar. Having got their nectar, they needed a vessel to store it in, and the god Vishwakarma moulded for them . . . a pot. And so the pot in India, made from terracotta, has always had a religious significance. Filled with water, it has from time immemorial been a good omen, necessary to every religious ceremony. Indeed, if no image of a god is available for worship, a pitcher full of water makes an acceptable substitute.

The most powerful use of terracotta in religious life is as offerings to the gods. In many an Indian village one stumbles across heaps of terracotta animals lying in a grove of trees, or in an open field, or outside a shrine. Their derivation from pottery utensils is plain to see. Their bodies are sometimes the exact shape of large pots, their legs and heads smaller pots stuck on at the corners. Elaborately decorated or simple to the point of abstraction, these are the villagers' own offerings to the gods, usually at an annual festival. They are humble, humane equivalents of ancient living sacrifices. Offerings may be intended to ward off diseases, or to bring children to a barren couple, and they have an intriguing code of symbols. If the couple wants a boy, they offer a horse with a rider; if they want a girl, the horse is riderless. Sometimes the horses are placed beneath huge trees, in the hope that the gods who live in those trees will use them to ride out at night and visit the sick and the distressed. Gulab Chand, a potter from Gorakhpur who was in Britain for the Arts Council tour, says: "Clay images are for poor people, and we who make them are poor people too; but they express our devotion as much as bronze images would do."

There is a direct link between the pottery being made today and its ancient forebears. Indian craftsmen learn their skills from a master (*guru*), and study the classic manuals of art (*shilpa shastra*). In the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, for instance, I watched stone carvers at work. The vital statistics of their gods and goddesses, the size of the waist, the distance between their eyes, the relationship of both to their overall height, all were circumscribed by tradition and in the manuals. It sounds like a recipe for sterility, but it is far from that. Devlankunda Vadiraj, from Bangalore, who carved a magnificent stone Surya, or Sun-god, while he was in Britain, says: "My *gurus* taught me to carve stone, wood and ivory . . . but I always sought my own style and identity within the traditional discipline."

The *guru* may have started by teaching him how to carve. But as a wise teacher and a responsive pupil establish a rapport, knowledge is added to practical information, and wisdom added to knowledge. Through this growth to maturity, the craftsman learns the supreme importance of working in a tradition and of keeping within its limitations. It was an English craftsman, Eric Gill, who said: "It is not merely that you get tired of too much liberty, but also that too much liberty is a weight, a positive hindrance . . . Truly, freedom is only found within bounds, and rule is the removal of fetters."

Stone is one of man's earliest friends in nature. Learning to work it marked a step forward in his ability to devise new and sharper tools, to master more difficult materials, like metal. The Dhokras are a traditionally nomad people, though they have now settled in West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. For centuries, they have been engaged in casting bell metal, a mixture of copper and tin. The technique employed as the *cire perdue* or lost-wax process.

In India, metal-working has accumulated its own rules in the *shilpa shastra*. Krishnamurthi Kamaraj[1], a sculptor in bronze, comes from Swamimalai, the Tamil Nadu village where the most famous of Hindu religious images, the Nataraja, or divine dancer, seems to have originated. In a cosmic dance, Shiva Nataraja holds up his right hand in a gesture which says "Do not be afraid". Beneath his right foot, Mayalaksha, representing a cloud of materialism, is about to be dissolved by Shiva's spiritual power. The circle of flame round the dancing god tells of the eternal cycle of creation and destruction. Says Kamaraj: "The rulers of Thanjavur employed . . . two brothers to make the idols for the . . . temples when they were built three hundred years ago. I am descended from one of these brothers, whose son Muthuswamy first used the title . . . "Image Maker" in our family . . . My father . . . taught me our art from my boyhood, especially the images of Shiva and Parvati, and, above all, the dance pose of Shiva, for which my father had become famous."

Many a child in a craftsman's house learns the discipline of the father's art almost as soon as he learns to walk and talk. He is given his own tools; he is taught his

own techniques. And it is not only the boys. Women are expected to play their part too. In some crafts, indeed, they are the main practitioners. Ajin Kamei was one of two craftswomen in the Arts Council show. Like all the women of her tribe in the remote north-eastern state of Nagaland, she weaves the cloth for her family on a special "loin" loom made from six sticks and a belt which goes round the weaver's waist: "We all learned to weave as soon as we were big enough to manage the loom; our mothers taught us. There were matches to see who wove fastest and best; my mother always won."

In Gujarat, each tribe and community has its own variety of embroidery to decorate clothes and houses. Tejiben Makwana, craftswoman from Ahmedabad, explains that because they live in a dry country they love to dress in bright colours and use mirrors which remind them of water and distant mirages. I do not remember when I started embroidering. My mother must have taught me . . ."

India has not experienced yet the break in her crafts traditions which British handicrafts suffered in the nineteenth century. But she may be beginning to. The Westerner's new-found thirst for "ethnic" clothes and decorative objects is making its mark. In Channapatnam, the old centre of lacquered-toy manufacture near Mysore, a village craftsman's shed has been turned into a factory, a "sweat-shop" churning out thousands, tens of thousands, of napkin rings. But Indians do not use napkin rings. Nor, traditionally, do they turn pieces of wood on belt-driven lathes or colour them on production lines. Further down the village street, a true master of wood-carving, short of materials and perhaps shorter still of customers, has abandoned his inherited skills and makes hand-rolled cigarettes. Further along still, a craftsman was sent on a government-sponsored trip to Japan to study allegedly superior lacquering techniques. Now he has turned himself into "Mysore Pride Products", exclusive suppliers to a store in San Francisco. One of his workmen was painting tigers on little lacquer boxes: he was copying them from an American book with Walt-Disney-style illustrations. His San Francisco buyer had an even more extraordinary notion. As her customers loved those little Russian nesting dolls, she would have them made, but painted like jolly seafarers—more appropriate to Fisherman's Wharf than Russian peasant women. I could not resist buying a set of them: an Indian craftsman, using Japanese lacquering techniques to paint an American design on Russian dolls. Even in India, some crafts have come a long way from their origins!

It is like all those Indian dresses you see in smart boutiques over here. They are made in India all right: I saw them at Sanganer, some eight miles south of Jaipur, also a centre for hand-printing of materials. But of course Indian women do not wear dresses like that. They are designed for export, to London, or Frankfurt, or Amsterdam.

It is not my purpose to attack these developments. India's citizens need to earn reasonable livings and a careful development of her traditional crafts is playing an important part. The All-India Handicrafts Board that gives annual National Awards to craftsmen, is developing more efficient methods, even designing new tools and encouraging the use of new materials. It is an important function. Those "fisherman" dolls are fun, and can get away with breaking traditions and with wildly mixing cultures because they are done with panache, and the quality of their lacquer finish is first-class. A lot of other products are fit only for gimcrack emporia and airport souvenir shops. Objects traditionally carved from wood are now being made from ivory; worse still, plastic is taking over. That perfect marriage of appearance and function is giving way to the arty-crafty.

But the efforts of the Handicrafts Board, and of the Central Cottage Crafts Industries which provide their sales outlets, are not, I think, calculated to make the crafts "precious" or remote from ordinary people. Of course, some people buy mass-produced plastic or stainless steel. But many others accept the fact that traditional artefacts are not made to last. A terracotta utensil breaks after it has been in use for a time. A pottery figure crumbles away as it stands in the open air outside a shrine. Simple pot toys made for village children may last for weeks—or only minutes. No matter: the potter can soon fashion more from materials which are cheap and which nature has made available all around him.

An enchanting craft, which I had never seen until I went to India, is the making of flowers and decorations from the pith of the *shola*, a particular kind of water reed which grows in marshy areas in Assam and West Bengal. Rabin Malakar brought to Britain sacks-full of the thick stems of the *shola*, cut into lengths of a metre or less. He uses a sharp knife to slice it into paper-thin sheets, like peeling an apple, and fashions them into the most delicate and complicated shapes: "In every month there is a religious festival which provides us *malakars* (or garland makers) with work. We also make decorations for weddings and the special head-dresses which bridegrooms must wear."

Mr. Malakar's paper-thin traceries are rather fragile. When I visited him in the Delhi suburb where he is working for a year or two on the decoration of a new temple, he presented me with two exquisite flowers. Now they are squashed and should be thrown away, but what pleasure they have given me! So will the huge goddess—a Durga—he has made, which will stay in the Museum of Mankind long after he has returned to India. He is working neither for fame or posterity nor for riches—not even for permanence. Surely he is an exemplar for craftsmanship in the twentieth century. He uses a material which, because of its impermanence, will probably never be suitable for machine working. He does not waste resources or damage nature. But what he makes is good to look at, is cheap to buy, and performs a specific function, for which there will be a steady demand as long as people get married or worship in temples in India.

In Britain, too, the Crafts Council, and its predecessor, The Crafts Advisory Council, are encouraging crafts. Theirs is a different problem, and has called for a different solution. When the Council was established, crafts were widely thought to be anachronistic, left-overs from our pre-industrial past. The Council has gone a long way towards persuading us that crafts can make a positive contribution to our materialist society. But it can in no way integrate them into our ordinary life in the Indian manner, especially since its concentration on the "artist" craftsman, logical enough, makes the crafts more isolated, more rarefied. When we see "crafts" in the Council's newly enlarged and splendid London gallery, for instance, we are not looking at practical, useful everyday objects, but at works of art. It is no coincidence that many of them can be purchased through commercial art galleries and dealers.

Of course, there are Indian craftsmen who work for this "luxury" market too; who expect to see their works on display rather than in use. But they are in a minority, and they are not the craftsmen who impressed me in India, nor those who have come to Britain for the Festival. It is these visitors who can ensure that Indian handicrafts avoid the bland, the artificial and the coarse workmanship and design which have accompanied the worst of our new-found interest in handmade crafts.

"India is called a 'poor' country", the Arts Council catalogue reminds us. "But she is prodigal of the modest luxuries that contribute gaiety and excitement, colour and spontaneity, to the routine of existence".

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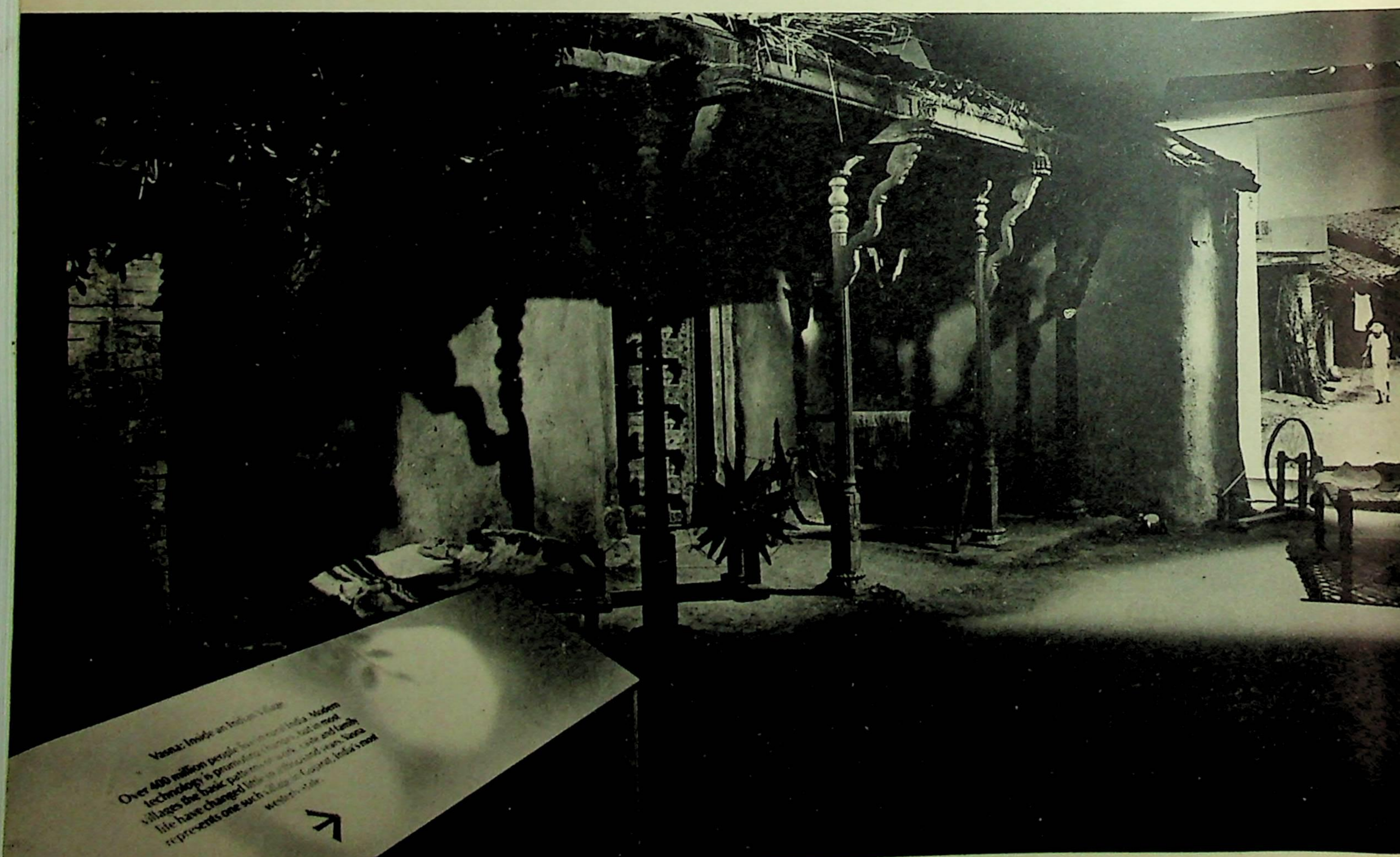
1 Krishnamurthi Kamaraj was unable to attend the festival and M. V. Lakshmanan went in his place.

Colin Ford

VASNA INSIDE AN INDIAN VILLAGE

The fundamental importance of village life in the genesis of Indian culture is now well documented and widely acknowledged. Even so, the contribution of the contemporary village to the full spectrum of cultural expression in India remains underestimated. This imbalance in the conventional assessment of India's heritage was reflected in the Festival of India itself. The decision to present the exhibition "Vasna", showing aspects of contemporary life in a village near Ahmedabad, was taken for two reasons: first, to provide a present-day and closely-focused example which would continue the story-line of the "Village to City" exhibition at the British Museum;[1] and second, more generally, to complement the rest of the Festival. Almost all the other exhibitions were wide-ranging surveys of one category of art or another. "Vasna" not only substituted the intensive treatment of one particular environment for the panoramic approach; it also demonstrated, as far as it was possible to do so within the limitations of space and the institution of an exhibition, that "art" is a quality immanent in the daily life of an Indian village and does not exist mainly, or even at all, for the majority of India's rural population, in those categories of art with which we are familiar in the West.

Major Festival exhibitions, such as "In the Image of Man" (classical sculpture and painting) and "Aditi" (contemporary and recent folk/popular traditions), revealed the interplay and continuity between folk and classical genres. These and many other events have indicated the pervasive style which can shape even the humblest creation. Yet, with only a few exceptions, the medium employed to carry this message is the art-object or the performance: categories which represent only a fraction of the cultural repertoire of India but which can be transplanted relatively easily to galleries and concert halls with minimum risk of rejection. It is satisfying that the Western public has been



brought thus to a broader and deeper awareness of Indian cultural achievements, but this has been accomplished at the cost of leaving largely unchallenged their own received, implicit and Eurocentric categorisation of art. For the same reason as the Festival was assured of a popular response, it was unable to directly instil a deeper understanding of the relationship between Indian art and society; at best it may have indirectly stimulated an interest in that relationship.

"Vasna" was an attempt to convey directly the special integration of art, craftsmanship, religion and other daily experiences in the lives of the majority of Indians. It was not an art exhibition in the conventional sense, though what it showed in a particular village environment certainly included objects and a use of space which have a powerful aesthetic component. Such is the art of ordinary life which is simultaneously the ordinary life of art—and therefore extraordinary for a Western public for whom art is, at least analytically, distinct from other aspects of social life. For them "art" is manifested concretely as objects or performances, to which the category itself is then reduced, so that the object or performance *is* "art" in its predominant sense. This approach to the aesthetic field has been vigorously criticised for decades within the *avant-garde* establishments, or counter-establishments, of Western countries, but with negligible effect on the wider public. The main criticism of the conventional view is that it diverts attention from aesthetic inspiration to its material expression, which obscures domains of subtle significance whose aesthetic expressions are transient, non-material or otherwise disregarded as "art" even by their creators. Ephemeral toys, casual gestures, movements, speech or song, the organisation of a meal and utilitarian objects with a limited functional purpose are all potential media for aesthetic expression, and in India may properly qualify as examples of art in a broad sense. It is not just the material object which can be regarded aesthetically, but its constructed context as well: the process of its manufacture, use and accretion of symbolic attributes.

This point also applies to the place of an exhibit in an exhibition or museum. Because of the reasonable assumption that a museum is a repository of beautiful and important objects, the visitor is inclined to interpret exhibits, regardless of their status in the culture from which they originate, in precisely these terms. Because an exhibition or museum in important respects symbolises for the general public the idea of cultural excellence and value, even a lowly object or display can take on an aura of artistic significance which may therefore become an obstacle or an aid to understanding. The problem confronting a museum curator who wishes to alert the visitor to broader and deeper aspects of aesthetic experience than conventional categories allow is how to overcome or neutralise or take advantage of the effect of the mode of presentation upon the public's perception of what is shown.

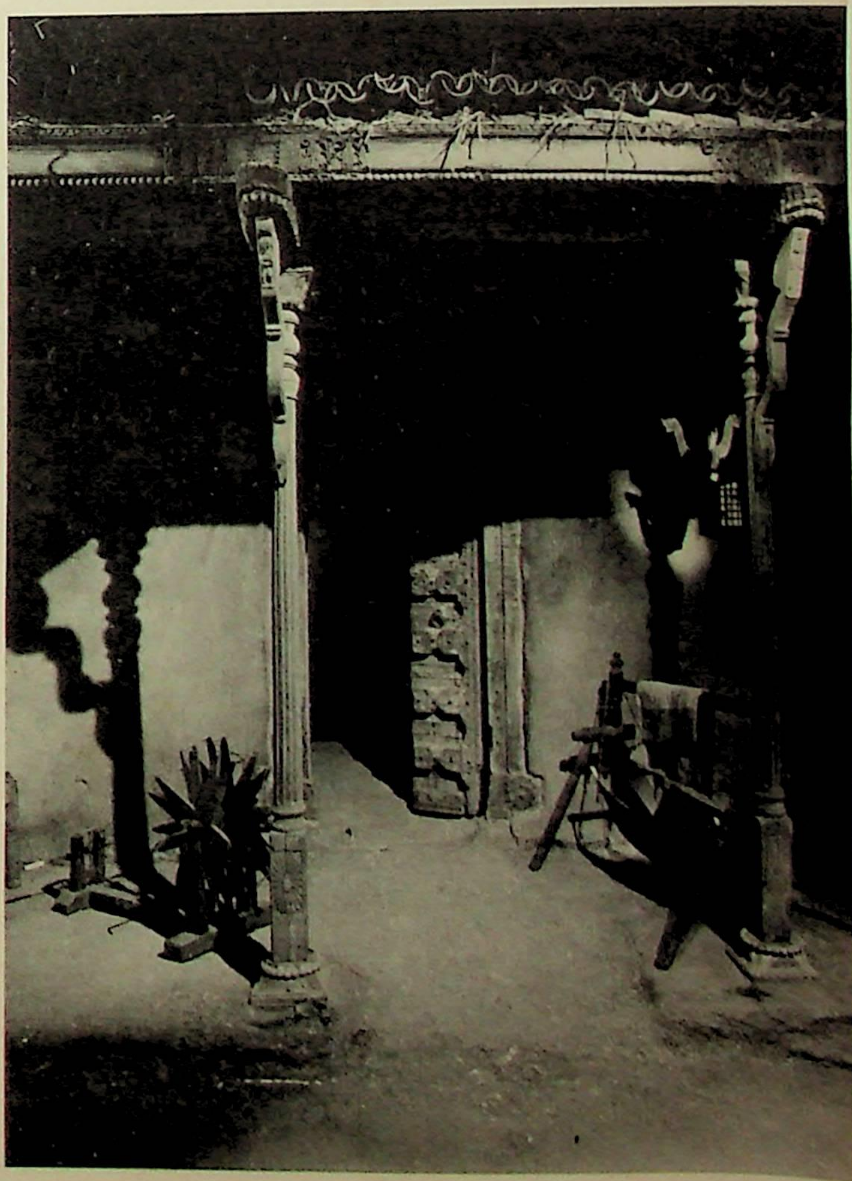
The physical structure of "Vasna" reflected its purpose as an exhibition. Among its more unusual features were the relegation of textual information to the end of the visitor's itinerary; the deliberate inclusion of craft activities and products which, from a conventional aesthetic point of view, are relatively unremarkable;

1 The introduction to "Vasna". A brief statement, informing or reminding the visitor that over 400 million Indians live in villages, points out that while modern technology produces changes, ancient traditions persist; "Vasna" is an example of one such village in Gujarat.

2 The side of the weaver's house showing a charpoy, quilted bedding made of *pachedi* cloth and dung-cakes drying on a wall in the background.

3 The verandah of the weaver's house showing ornately-carved wooden architecture, reeling-apparatus, a turned-wood cradle and suspension hook.





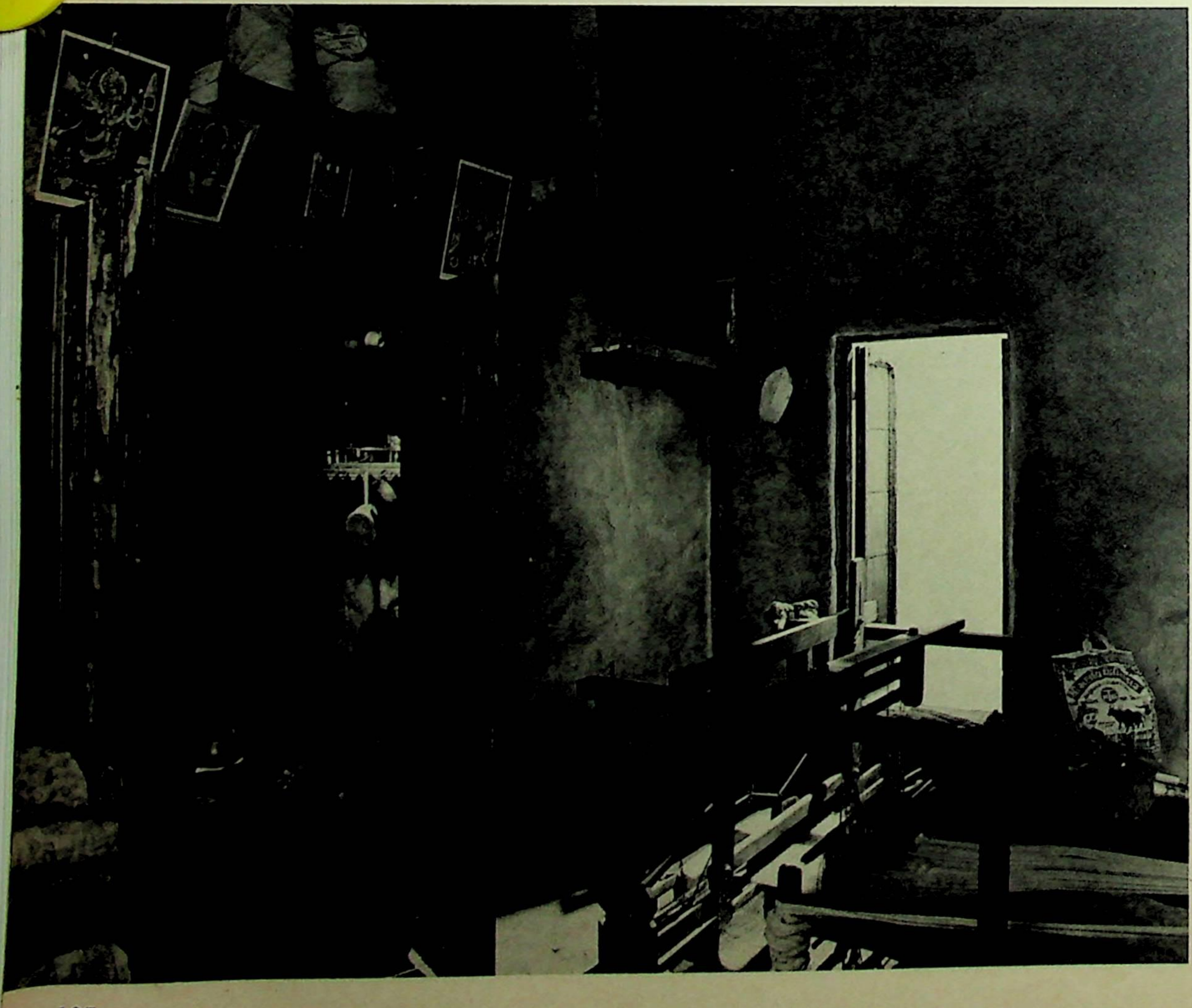
and the attention given to fine details of the environment of daily life.

The visitor approached "Vasna" with approximately the same preconceptions as if it were a real village. At the beginning of the exhibition could be read only its title and a brief statement: "Over 400 million people live in rural India. Modern technology is promoting changes, but in most villages the basic patterns of work, caste and family life have changed little in a thousand years. Vasna represents one such village in Gujarat, India's most westerly state." The visitor then entered a courtyard in the weaver's quarter, with charpoys, bedding and equipment for preparing yarn for the loom. Carved wooden columns, brackets and other architectural elements immediately counterposed against this somewhat drab setting the conspicuous skill of traditional craftsmanship; while the preponderance of the subdued earth colours of the ground, floors and walls was strikingly broken by the dazzling *toran* of mirrorwork and embroidery in reds and yellows above the massive door to the weaver's house. On entering the house, first the workshop and then the kitchen were seen as if the real occupants had just left; for the visitor the result was an insight into how both useful and incidental domestic equipment is distributed through the available space. The great *kothi* (storage jar) in the corner of the kitchen had, to many eyes, a pleasing shape; but in this context its functional and symbolic aspects took precedence.

On the wall by the back of the house, disc-shaped dung-cakes had been placed to dry in the sun. The distinctive and attractive aroma which arises from their use as fuel in the hearth was created within the exhibition as often as allowed by staff-time and the supply of a local substitute, produced by obliging British cattle. It is easy to be flippant, but in an Indian village such smells evoke deeply significant complexes of associations, at once symbolic and practical. Both the cow and the preparation of food are highly charged emotionally and ritually. It is appropriate, even if incidental, that the village should be pervaded by their real connection in the smoke from the hearth.

Nearby, along a short street, lay a potter's wheel and behind it his modest workshop beneath a rough awning. The limited tools and materials of his trade were there, together with examples of his work: water-pots, tiles, *kothis* of various shapes and sizes. Opposite, a bamboo basket filled with water-pots awaited transport to the market. With its back to a tank, shown in a series of giant photographs, was a small, lime-plastered shrine, dedicated to the village goddess Amba, whose painted polychrome likeness on a plaster plaque rested inside, garlanded with marigolds. A few yards away, a pair of full-size fibreglass bullocks, their expressions and stances rendered with great sensitivity, awaited release from the yoke of the traditional bullock-cart which they had just drawn to a halt. Past a leafy tree and some examples of agricultural equipment, the visitor emerged into the lobby at the end of the exhibition, where information panels, leaflets and a layout plan were available. A brass dowry-box and a cluster of suspended Ahmedabadi kites witnessed the visitor's departure from the only Indian village in Mayfair.

The exhibition was thus "explained", but only after visitors had been given an opportunity to enter the environment and observe it unaided. This provided relatively unmediated access to the very atmosphere of village life, which is so often lost when its general dimensions are reduced to sets of artefacts displayed on a shelf, or in a case, or when information panels and labels seem more numerous than the exhibits themselves. Once equipped with information at the end of the exhibition, the visitor to "Vasna" often went round again a second





time, deepening his first impressions without diminishing their impact.

No crafts in India are more widespread, ancient and important in local life than weaving and pot-making; yet museum visitors overseas, and perhaps also many urban Indians, are acquainted only with selected types of textiles and ceramics in which particularly high levels of artistic and technical skill have been achieved.[2] But creative competence can only be properly assessed in relation to the purpose of production. The weaver in "Vasna" was making *pachedis, dhotis,* for Rabari and Bharvad herdsmen; there was no call for technical brilliance; for limited needs are met in such places by an appropriate level of skill. In one craft after another such a relationship is normal throughout India. It is important to bear this in mind to correct the overemphasis on exceptional kinds of production in surveys of Indian crafts. Yet genuine aesthetic inspiration is at work as much among the humble as among the elite, and as much among the appropriately competent as among the spectacularly skilled.

"Vasna" also made the double point that a village need be neither remote from urban centres to retain old traditions nor so very close to them to experience only the disruptive effects of modern technology. Many artefacts in the exhibition, as in the village, derived from mechanised workshops and factories, yet mostly such objects mix easily, from the villagers' own point of view, with things of more traditional origin. On one shelf in the weaver's kitchen might have been seen together utensils of brass, stainless steel and aluminium. The *kothi* in the corner was full of rice grown in fields irrigated by one of the most extensive systems of canals in India, requiring a huge investment of capital and modern technology. The new aspect of contemporary village life was represented in the exhibition, like more traditional features, in the actual material on display.

Finally, a word about the choice of Gujarat, and of the area just to the south of Ahmedabad, as the source of this exhibition. "Vasna" itself existed only as an exhibition: the village on display was a composite representation based on a group of settlements, using material collected in the field from this area. Many other parts of India would doubtless have been suitable alternatives, but a major factor in favour of "Vasna" was the help which was received from the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad when I visited India in 1980 to prepare the exhibition, and especially an early introduction to Haku Shah, without whose close collaboration the exhibition could never have been realised. As creators of the artefacts displayed, the villagers themselves were the real authors of "Vasna", but it was only in sympathetic and insightful conversations with Haku Shah that the idea of exhibiting the culture of "Vasna" became viable. The exhibition was an assertion that the village, as much in its humbler as in its more glamorous forms, in an inexhaustible source of interest and inspiration essential to a proper knowledge of India.

Brian Durrans

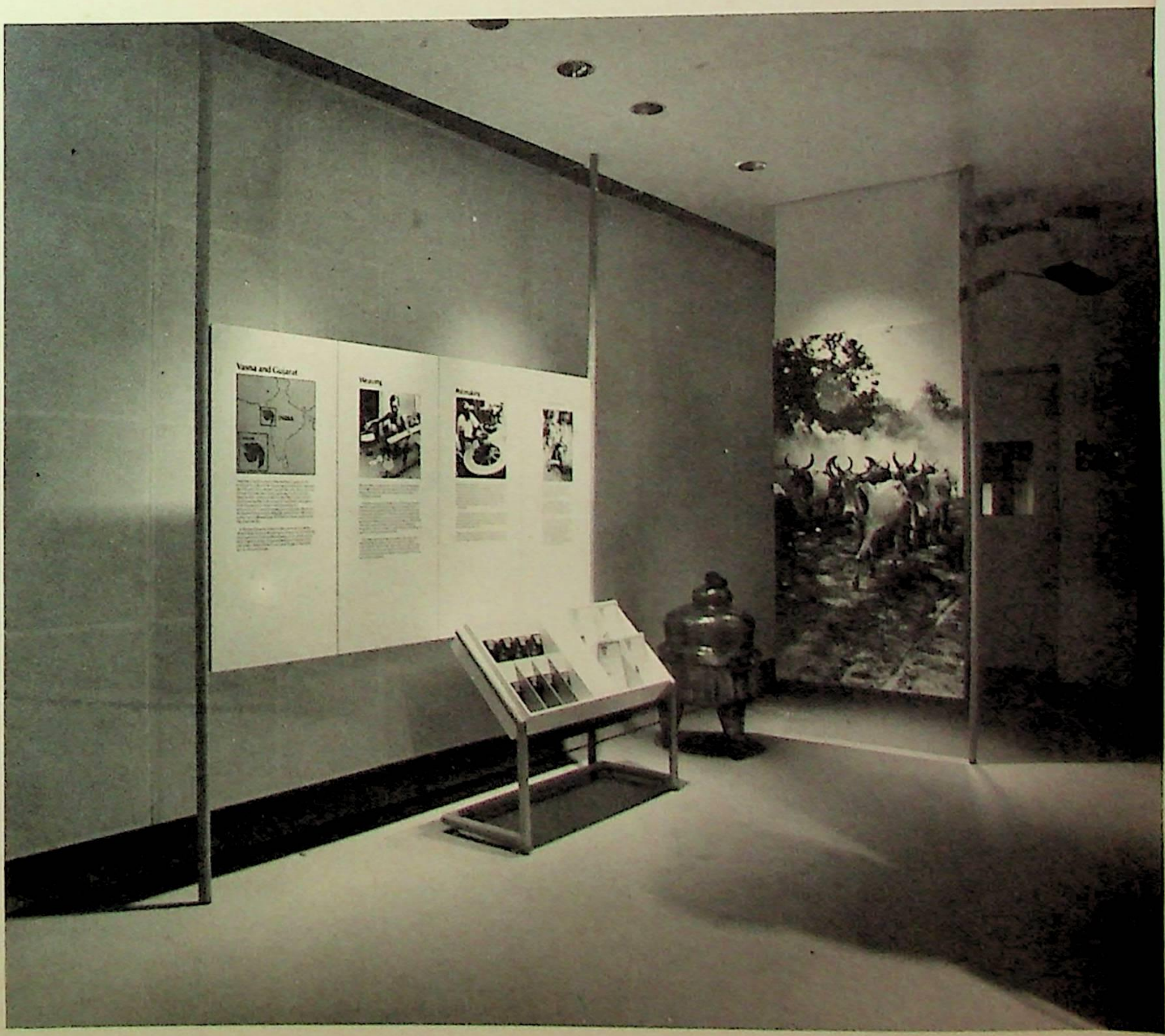
1 Brian Durrans and Robert Knox, *India: Past into Present*, London, 1982
2 Brian Durrans, "Handicrafts, Ideology and the Festival of India", *South Asia Research*, Vol. 2, No. 1, London, 1982, pp. 13-22

4 Inside the weaver's workshop. The typical pit-frame loom is set up for weaving *pachedi* cloth. The window allows the entry of light by which the weaver works.

5 Opposite the potter's workshop a fibreglass cast of the weaver's front door is used to show what this elaborate structure looks like closed. Suspended to its left is a wire toy.

6 At the end of the exhibition visitors can obtain background information.





Rural Living

For many years now I have been thinking of museums and exhibitions in the Indian context. I began with the premise that our country has two great cultural expressions. One is the "making" of an object or the creation of a ritual and the other is the "using" or "performing" of such in the actual process of living. In countries where most traditional culture has been lost, it may seem desirable to have the object or ritual shown in a glass case or a marked-off space. But here in India we have a cultural continuum. There is a living context, a visible environment. So why not look for ways and means to re-create that environment? An object, let us say a "pot", could be shown in its daily-life or ritual setting—a river bank or *ghat*. It could be shown being turned on a wheel in a potter's workshop. Either could be a fantastic experience for the viewer and could convey a totality—a better understanding of the environment. More and more museums and exhibitions in India, or in any other country where tradition is living, can be created in this manner.

When Dr. Brian Durrans of the British Museum came to me to discuss the exhibition, I was going to Dholka Village for the documentation of cart-making. He asked if he could join me. On the way we discussed the exhibition that was to be titled "Vasna: Inside an Indian Village" at the Festival of India in Britain.

Visualisation

India is a vast country. It is simply impossible to show a vast range of assorted things chosen at random. Statistical data, arts and crafts would be projected in different galleries and museums anyway. We felt it would be good, therefore, to create a very small part of a village to depict an integral Indian environment.

Innovations in agriculture and irrigation have contributed to changes in the villages around Dholka. People of different castes following various professions live side by side. Craftsmen, weavers and potters live traditional life-styles. City influences from Ahmedabad are also felt. It would be interesting to show the intermingling of these various elements.

Having clarified the concept, I started collecting the material. The people in Dholka area helped Dr. Brian Durrans and me immensely.

The heat of the sun makes people in India use the exterior space cleverly. The verandah becomes the central idea in the spatial organisation and hence an extension of the dwelling-place. A yard or a verandah plays a major role in one's daily life. It is difficult to display Indian crafts using contemporary museum methods. For example, in the "Vasna" exhibition it seemed natural to put a plough or any other agricultural implement alongside the verandah in an open space. This way one could also portray the weaver's verandah and the potter's verandah as workshops and place a bullock cart in the yard; we could have a small temple in a street or lane. We re-created a small segment of a rural village, attempting thus to reflect the flow of life in an actual Indian village.

We had also resolved not to make an extraordinary collection of beautiful or "museum" objects. "Vasna" had to have almost everything the villagers lived with. Postcards, bus tickets, popular prints of gods, contemporary radio music, a grinding wheel and other such things. This does not mean they were "ordinary" and not worthy of being "museum exhibits". On the contrary, the display had the intensity and depth of life itself. In this "show" of "ordinary" life one could see a cart, agricultural implements, a cradle, a hanger, doors, a temple. They conveyed a definite meaning. They were functional and were also products of excellent craftsmanship.

With technological development, crafts and the village environment have begun to lose their value. People sell off their beautiful utensils, textiles or ornaments to buy cheap material as mere showcase pieces. So it is important to restore respect for these objects. We know that change is inevitable and that it can be for the betterment of our lives. We therefore tried to reflect it also. But this does not mean that we can survive without a "base"; in fact, if we lose sight of our roots, change becomes undirected and can even be futile.

Exhibitions like "Vasna" can unearth and underline basic village value systems and bring them to the attention of people.

Collection for an Environment

And now for a word on collecting for such an exhibition. Collection of objects from the field area is a task in itself. It involves, among other things, encroaching upon a family's privacy. There is the problem of repayment also. Mere money cannot always achieve this. There are three ways by which one can obtain objects. All people connected with museums or anthropological research are aware of these:

(i) By trying to establish a rapport with the people of a specific area;
(ii) by adopting a business-like attitude; and
(iii) by aggressive acquisition.

I firmly believe in the first method. I would much rather let an object go than forcibly acquire it. I built up a rapport in this area, assisting people in various ways. Through my association with the local people, I obtained about 550 objects for the "Vasna" exhibition. It was a living experience, bringing me into fascinating contact with people. Some incidents are etched sharply in my memory and I should like to relate them.

People do sell carts in Dholka, but it took me two months to find one that I wanted, one that was just right for the exhibition. I called upon the person concerned. He agreed to sell the whole except for two things—the yoking rope and the *jotar*, for sentimental reasons. I asked him to replace them with new rope and yoke from Dholka market. He gladly did that and delivered the cart at Ahmedabad. The cart was brought in a camel cart!

We saw a very good potter right in Ahmedabad. In the process of buying his pots I noticed a beautiful old winnowing fan made of leather and reed next to him. I asked him if we could have it. Amazed and surprised, he wondered whether we had come to buy pots or his winnowing fan. He agreed to sell. No money can adequately pay for his gesture of goodwill and grace.

I was looking for a loom. Somabhai, a weaver from Chaloda, agreed to sell his fine loom in spite of his deep-rooted sentiments. We hesitantly made a deal. I was rather disturbed, wondering what he would do after I had taken his loom. I dared to ask, and he replied that he had another one upstairs. By the time I got mine for the exhibition, Somabhai and already installed the other loom.

To assess the quality of items was always a difficult task. Authenticity, tradition and change were all factors to be taken into account. For example, one can get innumerable jars, both old and new. I was in a potter's house in Ahmedabad. He had two beautiful old clay jars and he willingly parted with one, whereas new jars came from the villages! It was the same with windows of houses. I picked a few from potters', weavers', farmers' houses, and others, in junk shops. *Torans*, lintel-hangings, were also quite tricky. I bought an old one and some copies of calendar figures of Krishna, Ganesha and other forms. Both types were embroidered and very lovely.

There are many kinds of toys but very recently a combination of car and cart, a wire cart-car toy, was made by a tribal boy of south Gujarat. He had given it to my son. I decided to include it in the exhibition and it worked well. It was hanging near the door and a lot of people who came to the exhibition were inquisitive about it and amused by it. I took quite a risk with it; for it was neither from the "exhibition" area nor made by a farmer's or a craftsman's child. Yet a child is universally loved and one sees this sort of toy anywhere!

I was sitting on the bench at the bus stop at Chaloda Village. A humble "untouchable" was sitting near me. We talked about

various things. He invited me to his home and I went. He had a good house and seemed well-to-do. While having tea with him I learnt from him that his son who helped him in the fields often went to Ahmedabad, Paldi, Four Roads, "just to sit and breathe the city". I asked, "Where is the scrap of your old house?" He took me to a dark corner of another house and pulled out many things like brackets, old wooden horses, horns, etc. I requested him to sell them to me. He said, "This is of no use to us, you can take it." I insisted on paying him and acquired the whole lot.

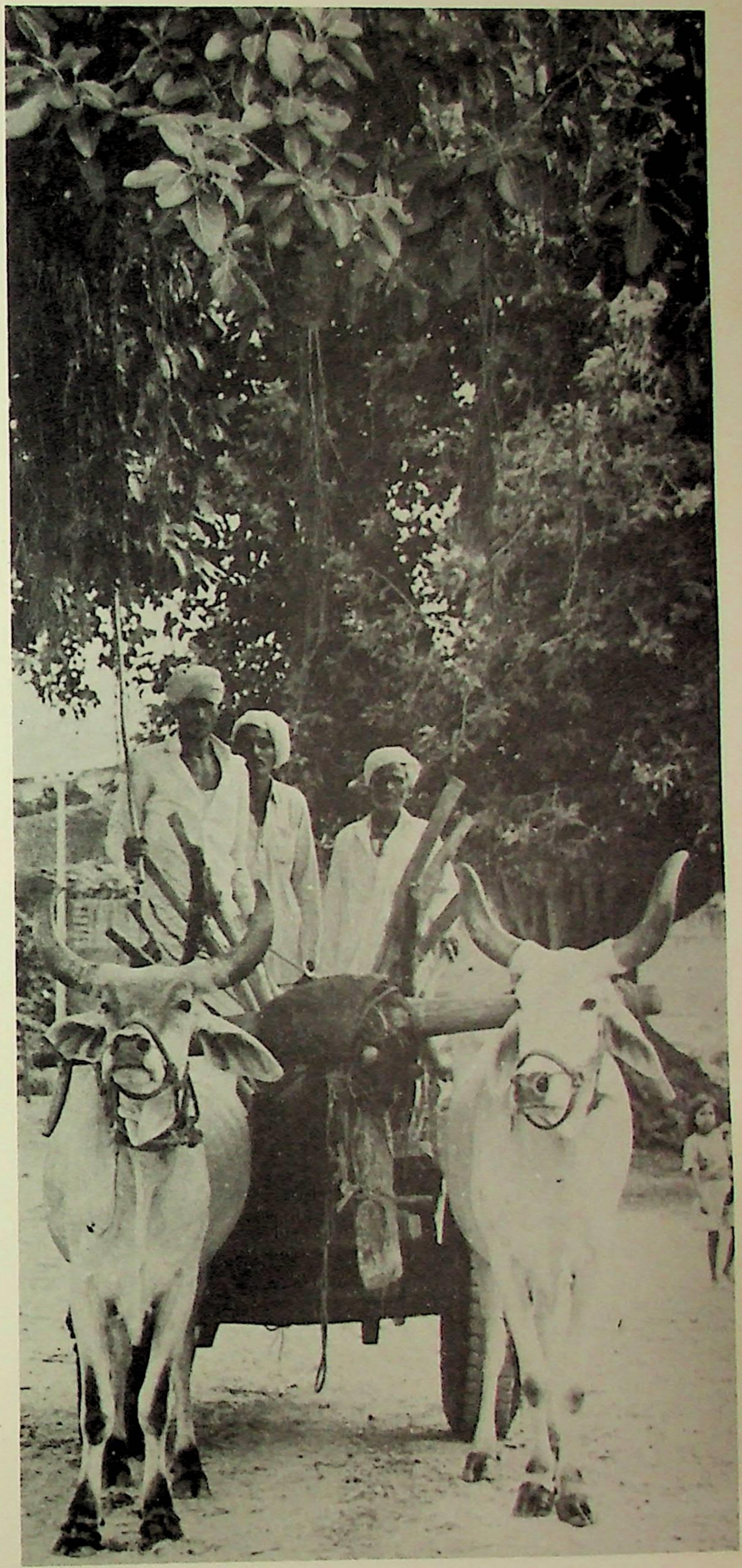
An interesting story about doors. I went to one of the junk shops where doors were brought in from the villages to be sold. The ones which were displayed were in my view either too simple or too elaborately carved and much too sophisticated. But I soon spotted a pair cast aside as junk which I thought was just right. They were not too expensive. So I bought them. They were beautifully carved, but old and very heavy. I began to doubt their authenticity and wondered whether such beautifully carved doors could be in a humble weaver's house. But the other day I went to Chaloda Village and the house of the Secretary of the Weavers' Co-operative had doors of the same kind. I was thrilled. Even simple folk had a rich life-style. In fact, in London, the designers got another pair of doors made in glasswool, and both pairs were a highlight of the exhibition.

Since the atmosphere of a village environment had to be created, more than mere collection of objects needed thought. There was the complicated visualisation of such an environment, utilising things like roof-tiles, cowdung cakes, windows and doors. It was also no easy task for the designers to assemble all the available objects into a village street.

When I reached London before the opening of the exhibition, I put in a few finishing touches—coins inside the temple, a trident on the temple, leaf-and-flower *torans* on lintels, a few niches in the weaver's house for placing keys or a matchbox or a small lamp. I scattered homely objects around the room—a postcard near the loom, a storybook on a cot. I placed water at different points—near the potter's wheel in a clay bowl, in a can in the yard near a stone slab for washing clothes, a utensil of water near the kitchen oven.

And thus, detail by detail, we managed to project the flavour of an Indian village, its sights and sounds and smells, its vanishing crafts, its leisured pace.

Haku Shah



Key to the Plan

Courtyard

From the courtyard can be seen the village architecture including the front of the weaver's house, roofed with pottery tiles *(deshi naliya)* and with verandahs *(otlo)* supported on elaborately carved pillars (thicker *thambhalo,* thinner *thambhali*), beams and brackets *(fanhado).* The figures on the brackets (*dholvalo*) are considered welcoming. Windows or ventilators (*bari* or *jaliyu)* are unglazed, with bars or shutters.

1 A double yarn winder *(falko),* beneath a photograph showing its use by the weaver to twist two skeins of cotton yarn into one.

2 "Spinning" wheels *(rentiyo)*: one traditional, the other made from a bicycle wheel. Spinning is not done in this village and these wheels are rigged to wind yarn on to the bobbin of the weaver's shuttle.

3 Beds or "cots" *(khatlo)* of wood and thick string, kept outside in the day and used here for airing clothes and bedding, but also as seats or couches.

4 Quilted bedding *(godadi).*

5 Locally-woven cotton cloth *(pachedi).*

6 House-front with carved columns of teak on stone bases and beams and temporary door of reeds *(jhapali).* Small broom *(savarani)* made from the leaves of the date palm.

7 Children's toys and a picture book based on Hindu mythology. In the corner by the wall, a child's pull-along toy *(gadi)* on which stylized parrot figures rotate. Bought at a fair.

8 Baby's cradle with turned wooden frame and a cloth hammock *(jholi)*—the frame and cloth together are called *ghodiyu*—a quilt cover and teething rattle *(ghugharo).* Next to one of the verandah columns is a pair of women's shoes *(sapat),* children's toys—cart/drum *(damak* or *gadi)* and rattle *(ghugharo)*—winnowing tray *(supadu)* and a basket *(topli)* made of date-palm leaves, sold by itinerant gypsies.

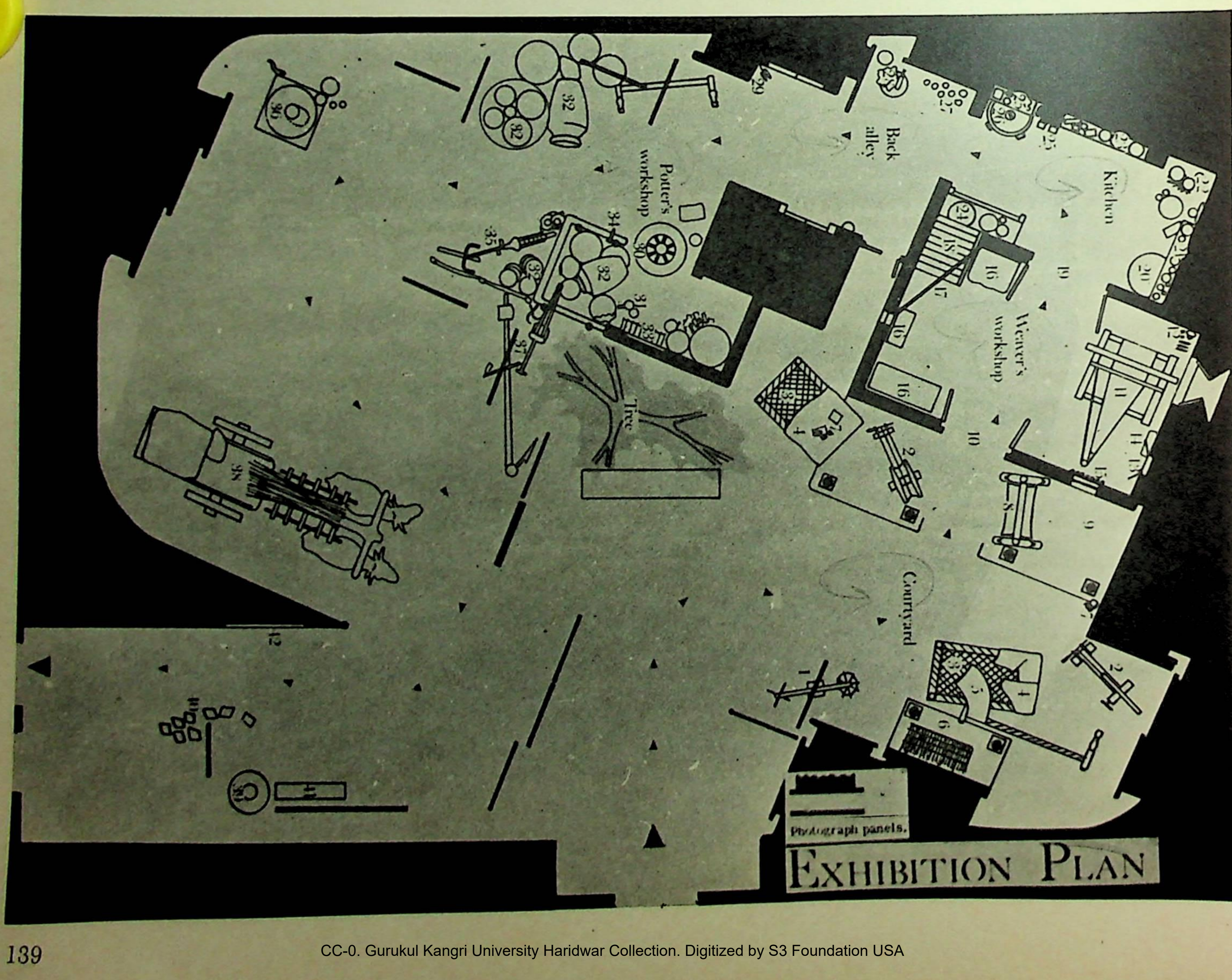
9 Hooks of carved wood *(khinti),* water, buffalo's horn and a winnowing tray hanging from beams of the verandah. A wooden lamp support *(divo),* is to be seen on either side of the door, while the window is flanked by stylised horses *(ghora).*

10 The doorway of the house consists of the frame *(barsakh),* and the door itself (*barnu*) in two halves. Carved projections (*todlo*) occupy the upper corners with a lintel between bearing carved floral motifs in imitation of the cloth-hanging (*toran*). Below this, the door threshold (*umro*). Both the lintels and the *umro* are cleaned every morning and devotional designs are applied to the *umro* by the housewife, using rice-paste and red *kum-kum* powder. Above the door is an embroidered cotton and mirror-work *toran.*

Weaver's Workshop

The weaver works in the front room of his house, which in this case is also a general living and sleeping room. Beds are moved in and out as required, but men may sleep outside in hot weather. The floor is a mixture of clay and cow-dung, applied in semi-circular patterns (*okali*).

11 The loom, next to a window, of the pit-frame type, with



the heddles (separating the warp threads so that the shuttle carrying the weft can pass in between them) operated by treadles under the loom. The cloth woven is used mainly by herdsmen castes, Rabaris or Bharvads, for loincloths and wraps. On the loom-frame by the window are spare hanks of cotton yarn; a relatively elaborate *pachedi* with a coloured ground lies folded over the window-sill. Hanging on the loom-frame near the shrine is a cotton bag bearing in Gujarati the name of the shop in Ahmedabad where it was bought, *Mahadev Theli Bhandar* (Mahadev Bag Shop) and the slogans, popularized by former Prime Minister, Mr. Shastri, "Victory to the Young Man" and "Victory to the Farmer".

12 Spare shuttles and the weaver's *hookah,* pipes and tobacco.

13 A household shrine (*mandir*), where food or flowers are offered and lamps lit before prints of (top) Hanuman (the monkey-god) and (below) Krishna and his consort Radha. The prints are festooned with marigold garlands (*galgotha no har*).

14 Old valve radio broadcasting mainly Gujarati Indian music, on which are a newspaper, *Gujarat Samachar,* a purse (*theli*), letters and bus tickets.

15 Old lightbulbs hanging as a decorative garland.

16 Lockable metal or metal-bound trunks (*nano*) and boxes (*pataro*) with a pile of quilts displayed on top, used to store valuable household possessions, such as costumes and jewellery.

17 Clothes hung on a line to dry.

18 Stairs to a loft over the kitchen, used for storage (and inaccessible to visitors).

19 On the wall hangs a calendar with a picture of Krishna; over the door, prints of gods and goddesses: (left to right) *Meladi mata,* Ganesh, Kali, Amba.

The Kitchen

The kitchen contains all the utensils necessary for preparing, cooking and serving food.

20 A large earthenware jar (*kothi*), in which rice is stored.

21 Shelves of pans, plates, bowls and cups for cooking and eating, the older ones of brass, tinned inside, and the newer of stainless steel or aluminium, with saucepan, tiffin (snack) can, grater, china cups, etc.

22 The hearth, with flour and rolling board for preparing *chapattis* and other food.

23 Copper vessels of water (*degdi*) and brass box with lid (*dabdo*); also tin of powder for indigestion (*faki*).

24 Earthenware water pots (*ghado* or *matlu*) and brass water-serving vessel (*lotho*) on a carved wooden sideboard. Above the bench, a mirror (*ariso*).

25 Tins of dried beans and peas. Shelves of tins, jars and boxes of food, spices and snacks (e.g. *chevado*), sweets (e.g. *penda*), ghee and vegetable oil.

26 The stone quern (*ghanti*) on a table (*thalu*), for grinding wheat or rice into meal, and pestles for pounding, used in a depression in the ground outside. A smaller pestle is used with a portable wooden mortar (*kandari*).

A Back Alley between the weaver's house and potter's workshop, with house walls and doorways.

27 Cakes of cowdung mixed with straw (*chhana*), drying on the wall for use as fuel.

28 Clothes for washing, with a discarded millstone as a "wash-board" and paddle (*thapi*), soap (*sabu*) and water in a brass bucket (*dol*).

29 A child's toy "car" (*gadi*), with wire wheels and steering column. Above the adjacent door is another *toran* with a double image of Laxmi, women churning and the monkey-god Hanuman.

Potter's Workshop

The potter works under an open-sided shelter adjoining his house.

30 The potter's wheel, with a weighted rim, turned by hand with a stick. Here the clay is turned and hollowed as the first stage in making a pot.

31 A paddle, used for beating the outside of the pot and an anvil, held against it on the inside. These tools are used to spread and thin the walls of the rough "pot" to create its finished shape.

32 Finished pots, stacked after firing. The large pots will be used for storing grain or for holding water; the smaller ones are the more usual water pots (*doriya*). One batch is packed in hay in a basket of split bamboo, ready for transport. The *doriya* pots are intermediate in size between the larger *matlu* or *ghadho* and the smaller *matli.* All such pots are decorated sparingly on their upper halves with a red slip and may sometimes be burnished with a string of *kachuka* seeds. Black pots of the same shape are said by some people to keep water cooler. Cooking pots have wider mouths.

33 Roof tiles, made by the potter as cylinders, then cut in half.

34 Hoes (*pavado*), used in preparing the potters' clay.

35 A robust bicycle, made in India, an important means of personal transport. Behind this is a child's mask (*mohrun*), bought at a fair.

36 A small shrine or temple (*mandir*), dedicated to the tiger-riding goddess Amba. Her image in painted plaster can be seen inside, where a lamp burns among offerings of coconut, red powder, coins and incense. To the left of the figure of Amba is a small figure of Ganesh and a painted image of the goddess Laxmi; to the right is a small copper plaque also dedicated to Amba. Prayerbooks lie outside and the dome is hung with a garland of marigolds and painted with one of Shiva's or Parvati's symbols, a trident, which is also to be seen on the front of the bicycle. The perforated pots (*garbo*) are designed for use with oil lamps so that the light can shine through.

37 Agricultural tools: a harrow for breaking up the ploughed soil and another implement for levelling the soil, both drawn by bullocks or buffaloes, a hoe, sickles for reaping grain and a winnowing tray for separating grain and chaff after threshing.

38 A cart (*gadu*), with iron-shod wooden wheels, drawn by two bullocks: still the principal means of rural transport for goods and people.

39 A large brass vessel (*katodan*), for storing a bride's dowry of valuable costumes and jewellery, nowadays used for display rather than security, and more typical of western Gujarat than of Vasna.

40 Paper kites with reels of string (hanging from the ceiling). The strings are coated with powdered glass in order to cut the strings of other kites in competitions.

41 Leaflets about the exhibition.

42 Noticeboard of events relevant to the exhibition.

The Master Weavers

The concept of the exhibition "The Master Weavers" took shape as a result of a chance conversation which deplored the fact that traditional textiles of superlative quality were no longer available. Yet no-one doubted that the skills to make such textiles were still extant. The crux of the matter was to find these skills and then create proper channels for their utilisation and appreciation.

The organisers of the exhibition, after exploring, absorbing and considering the constraints of the contemporary context, identified the master weavers and employed their expertise in the creation of the highest expressions in traditional textiles of all types.

"The Master Weavers" exhibition displayed high-unit-value textiles, fabrics of such splendid quality as were seen, not long ago, in royal and aristocratic *milieux.* Such textiles, by their very nature, are not produced in bulk. They need to be commissioned. And there lies the reason for their decline; fewer and fewer persons are in a position to purchase them, for, a high-unit-value textile such as a *jamdani sari* takes from nine to twelve months to complete and a 72-inch *konia chakra posh* (spread) requires a *naksha* (draft) that calls for two months of preparation. The cost factor thus becomes prohibitive, and that in turn leads to dwindling demand. The craftsman finds it increasingly difficult to continue the tradition. Often he veers away to another vocation like selling *pan* or serving as a bank clerk — which is not only more lucrative but also not as exhausting.

It is at this juncture that the discerning patron — whether it be a government agency or a private individual — must step in. The master weaver must be persuaded, in every way, that his craftsmanship is relevant to society and he must be convinced that what he knows is his finest and best asset.

In this exhibition of specially commissioned high-unit-value textiles the *sari* served as the focal point. It is the single most important unstitched garment in India and encompasses the entire range of vocabulary in technique. Furthermore the motifs and decorative devices on it reflect the ritual practices and the cultural ethos of the land.

1 *Puja sari* (detail: *pallav* and border)
Silk-brocade; 535 x 120 cms.
Tamil Nadu

A Dialogue

Martand Singh, the Director of the exhibition, discussed the concept, objectives and the scope of the show with Jyotindra Jain, the author of the catalogue.

J.J.: Originally your exhibition was called "Vishvakarma" but later on it was entitled "The Master Weavers". Does this change of nomenclature indicate a change in the concept of the exhibition?

M.S.: There was no change in the concept. "The Master Weavers" was suggested as an appropriate title for a British audience.

J.J.: How would you define the theme and scope of "The Master Weavers"?

M.S.: A concern with excellence, in an environment that naturally concerns itself more with quantity than quality.

J.J.: Conceptually as well as in terms of content how would this exhibition compare with the one collected by George Watt in 1903?

M.S.: Both have served the same function. Both have indicated the finest that is available in the living environment. The main difference is that in 1903, George Watt selected from what was available. In 1982, the textiles had to be specially commissioned. Both exhibitions have hinted at the deterioration of skills.

J.J.: For the major part, you have tried to recreate textiles by reviving designs, techniques and materials. Do you think you have succeeded in structurally recreating them or are these somewhat inferior replicas of the lost originals?

M.S.: To determine the level of skill, it is necessary to match what can be made with what, in the consideration of experts, is the finest. The exhibition then serves as a contemporary reference of what is still possible. Technically and structurally the woven exhibits were as competent as, and in some cases superior to, the original references. In the painted and printed sections, however, except for two examples, the quality of line-work and colour filling was inferior.

J.J.: Have you accepted changes in designs, materials and techniques and therefore in the very nature of the fabric in your recreations because certain traditional textiles simply cannot be recreated owing to technical and cultural reasons?

M.S.: There is no textile that cannot be recreated. You need large financial resources, a detailed assessment of raw material requirements and a clear determination of the level of skill. If these factors complement each other appropriately, and more importantly, if the material conditions of the craftsmen are adequately provided for, anything is possible.

J.J.: Do you believe that if the Indian crafts traditions have to survive in modern times, they have to be altered to the so-called modern or Westernised taste? That only then they would be economically viable? If so, to what extent will this change influence the traditional Indian set-up — will it not become an imposition on the traditional clientele?

M.S.: The problem is not merely Westernised taste. We face in this generation a cultural crisis of confidence. Mediocrity flourishes and becomes in itself the aspiration. We are moving from an era of patronage to a confused state of sponsorship. The former, even if whimsical, is clear; the latter, anonymous and statistical. I believe, however, that in another generation, once we have become comfortable with our own cultural patterns and equally with the cultural patterns of the world around us, some balance will be achieved: and the *kurta* or shirt, *churidars* or jeans, *sari* or skirt will have equal status. It is the rural areas that provide us with the hope that indigenous systems and patterns are relevant and viable.

J.J.: What is the future of the *sari* and to what extent is it important for the future of India's handloom industry?

M.S.: The *sari* is the bedrock of the handloom industry.

J.J.: You have travelled all over India to collect material for this exhibition. How do you feel about the level of surviving traditional skills and their future? Do you remember any incident or dialogue with weavers, printers or dyers which reflects some key problem or anguish?



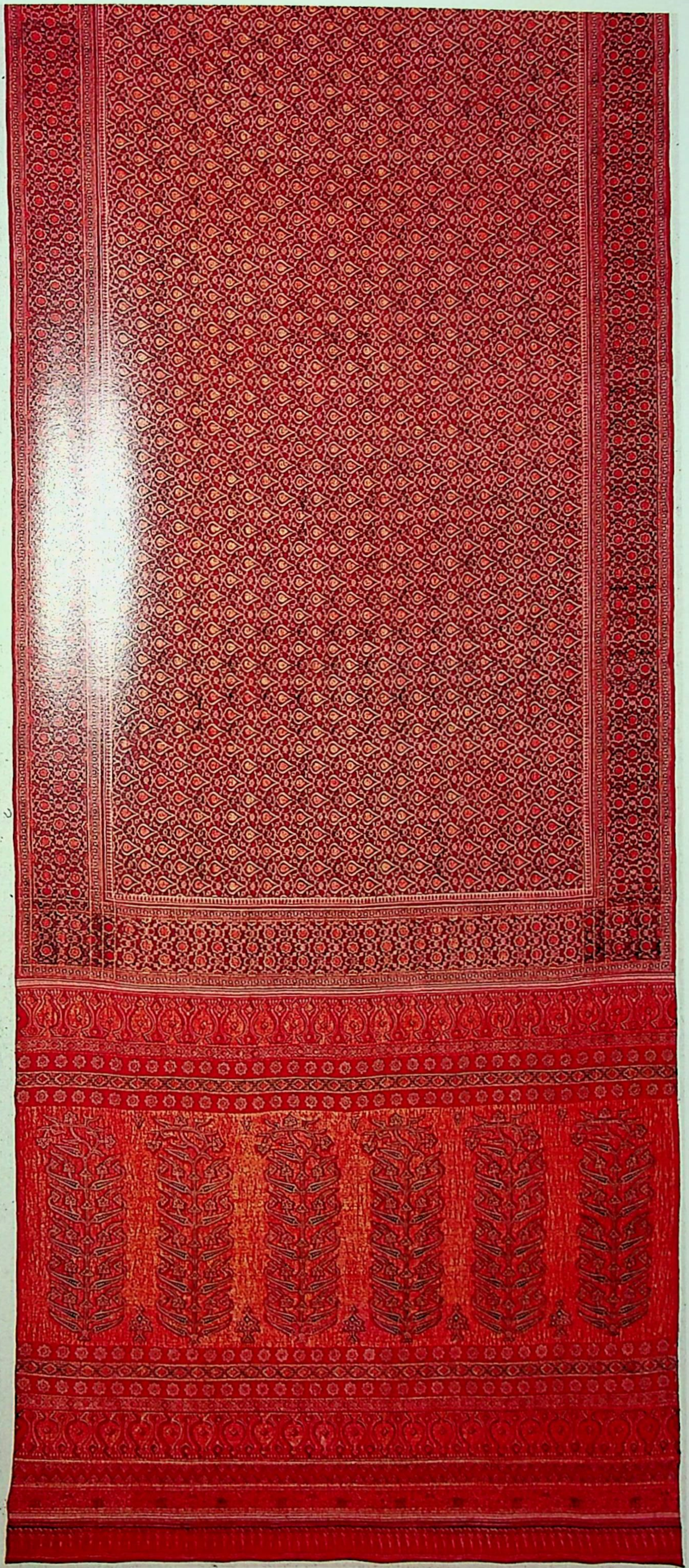
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M.S.: The aspiration of every craftsman is a higher level of earning. Therefore if we conceive a future of an abundant power supply, all handlooms will be replaced by powerlooms. As this is unlikely to happen in the next few decades, the immediate concern is the material conditions of craftsmen. Quite clearly there is anguish everywhere. There are individual craftsmen, however, who, if supported appropriately, will through their own excellence assure their futures. It is our responsibility to provide the environment and infrastructure for them to do so. Will we?

J.J.: What do you think are the strong and weak points of such an activity?

M.S.: The strongest point is that the craftsman still has the skill; the weakest, that the planner does not know what to do with it.

J.J.: What are your future plans?

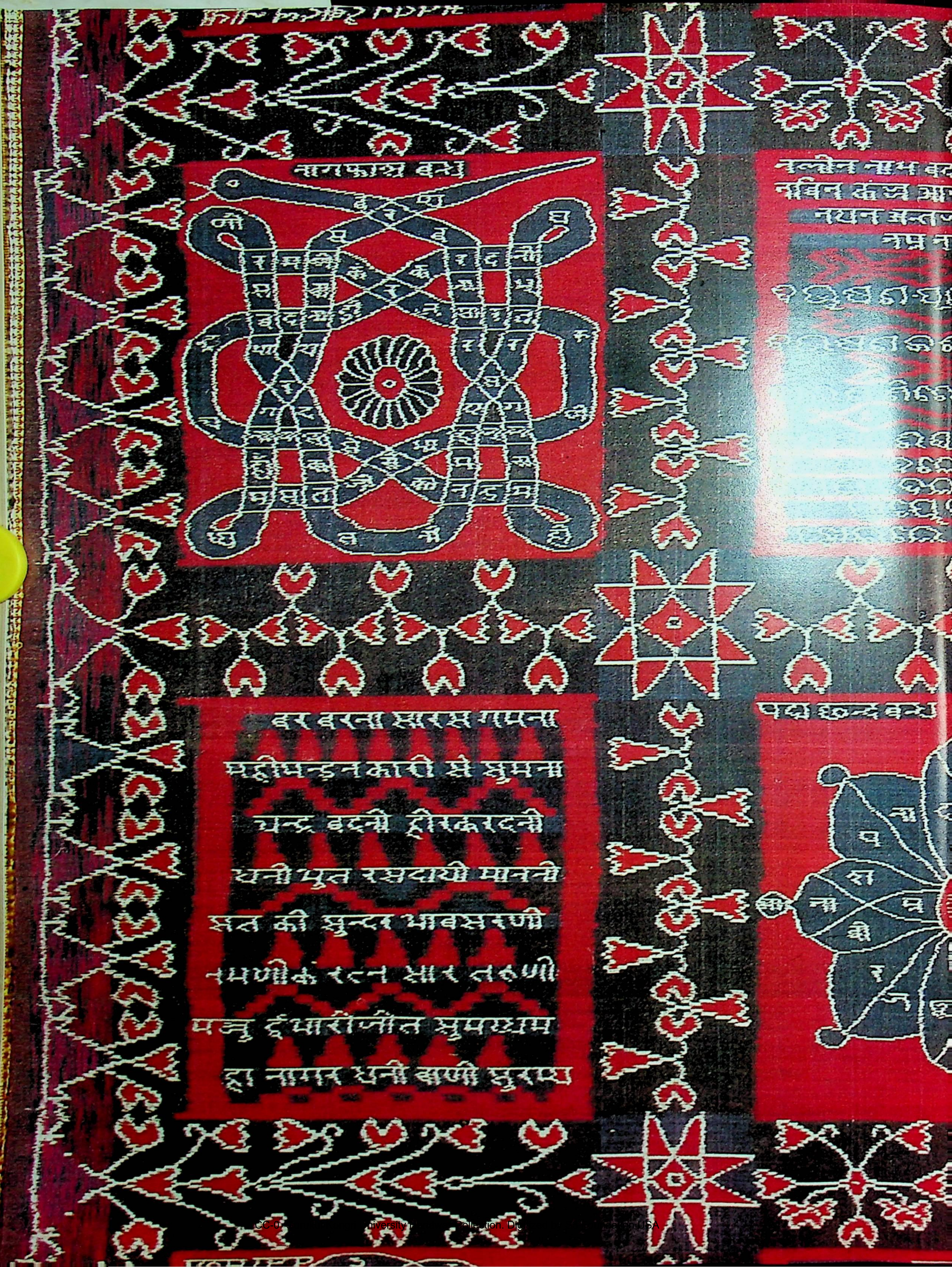
M.S.: I have concerned myself with individual craftsmen, who through their skill have achieved excellence, and I shall continue to serve as a conduit between sponsors and craftsmen to assure their continuity.

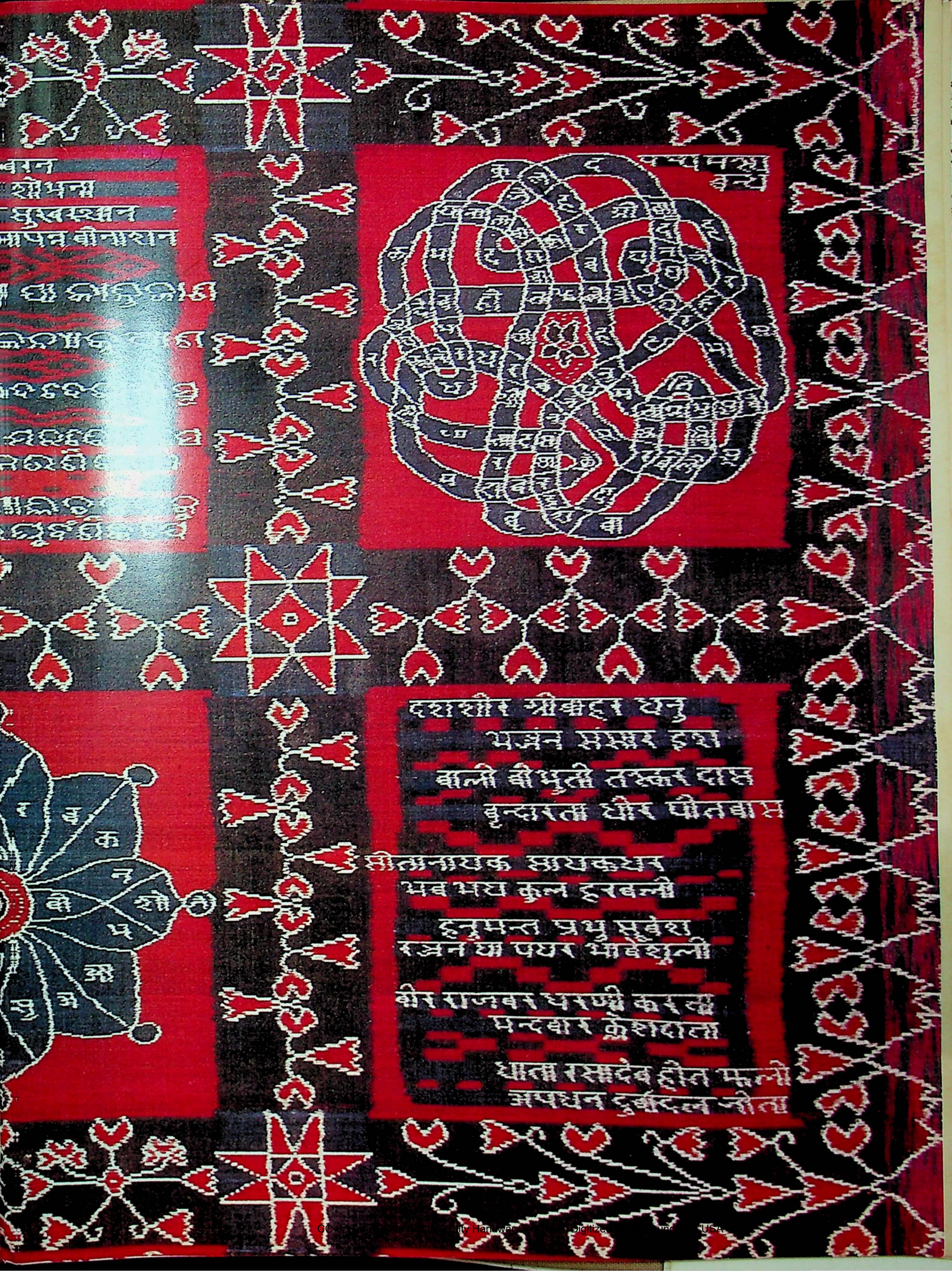
2 Temple-hanging with ***Surya, Navagraha, Ashtadikpalika***
Cotton, dye-painted; 218 x 293 cms.
Srikalahasti, Andhra Pradesh

3 ***Konia chakra kalamkari*** **spread**
Cotton, block-printed and dye-painted;
134 x 232 cms.
Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh

4 Sari (section)
Cotton, printed, with *zari*-brocade;
550 x 112 cms.
Kodalikaruppur, Tamil Nadu

5 Calligraphic *sari* (detail)—overleaf
Cotton *ikat*; 550 x 118 cms.
Bhubaneshwar, Orissa





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6 ***Sagtapar sari*** (section)
Cotton *ikat*; 550 x 118 cms.
Sambalpur, Orissa

7 **Yardage, woven with *latifa* motif**
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 243 x 112 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

8 **Thousand *butas sari*** (section)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 550 x 120 cms.
Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu

9 ***Khadi patti sari*** (detail: *konia*)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 528 x 115 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

10 ***Khadi patti sari*** (detail: field and border)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 528 x 115 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

11 ***Baluchari sari*** (detail: *pallav*)
Silk-brocade; 596 x 116 cms.
Murshidabad, West Bengal

12 ***Sari***
Silk with brocade; 534 x 115 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

13 ***Sari*** (detail: *guldaudi buta* from *pallav*)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 535 x 115 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

14 ***Sari*** (detail: *guldaudi buta* from *pallav*)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 530 x 114 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

15 ***Baluchari sari*** (detail: *pallav*)
Silk-brocade; 596 x 116 cms.
Murshidabad, West Bengal

16 ***Shikargah sari*** (detail: *konia*)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 524 x 115 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

17 ***Jamdani sari*** (detail: *konia*)
Cotton with *zari*-brocade; 523 x 112 cms.
Dacca, Bangladesh

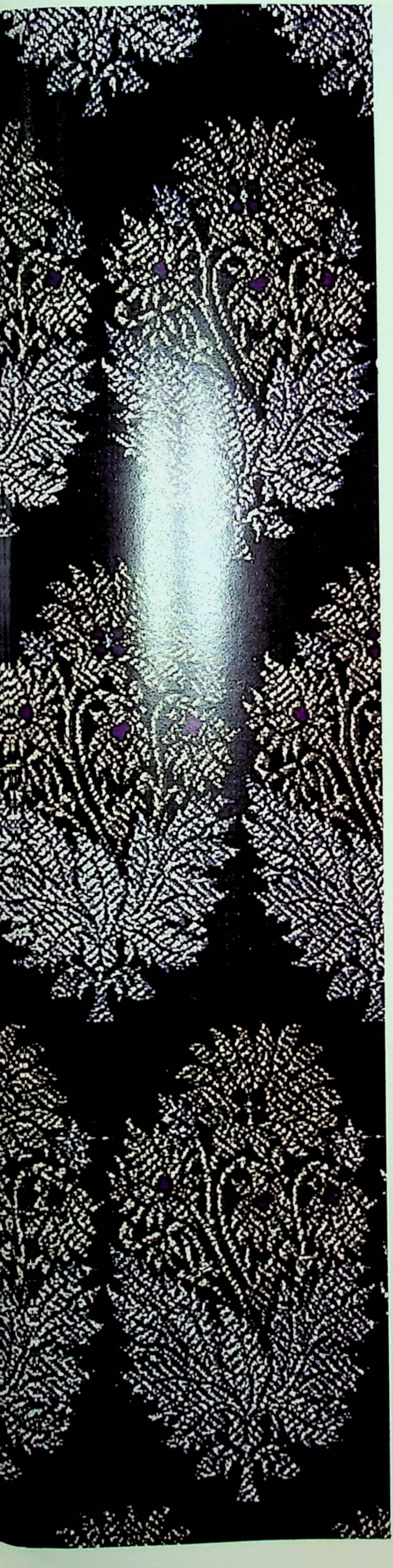
18 ***Shikargah sari*** (detail: border)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 524 x 115 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

19 **Thousand *butas sari*** (detail: border)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 550 x 120 cms.
Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu

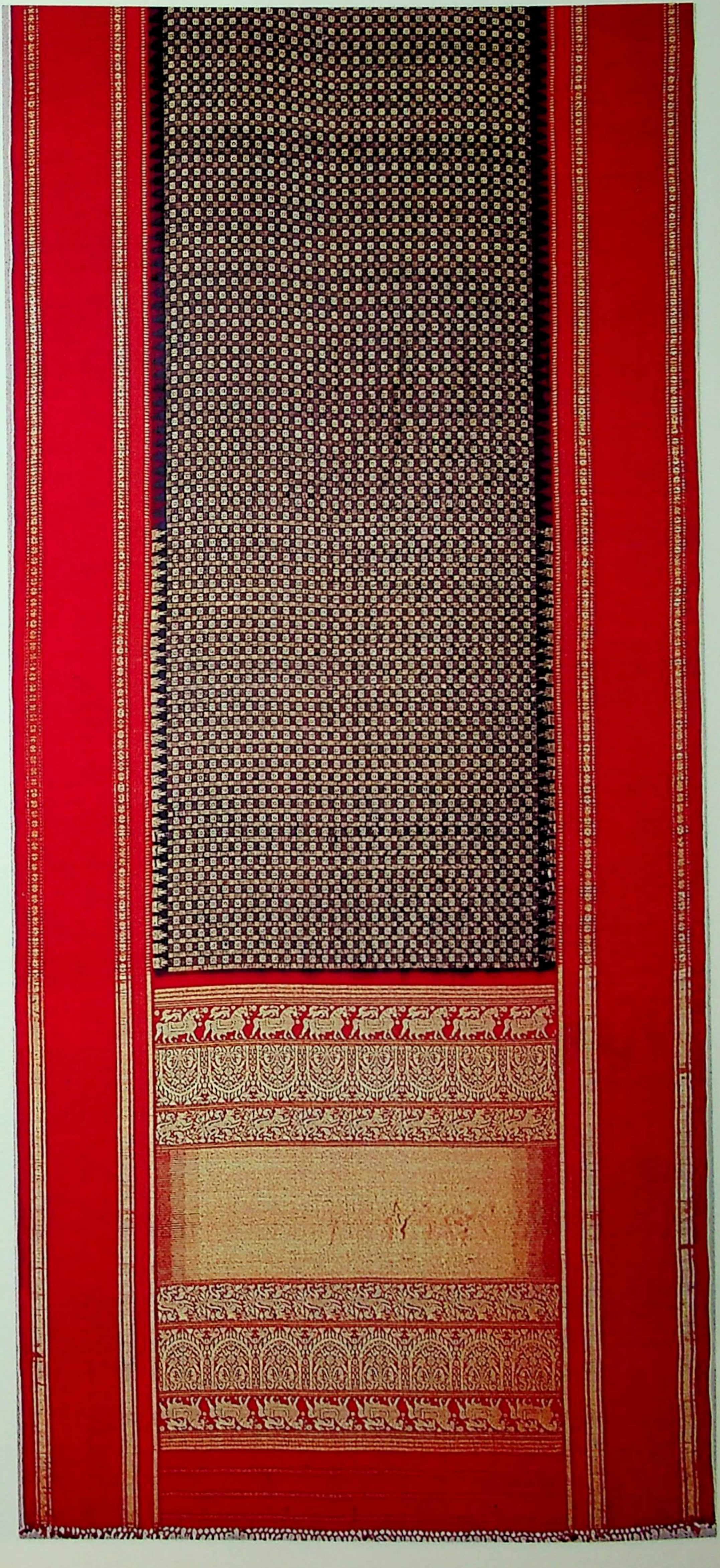
20 ***Sari*** (detail: field and border)
Silk with *zari*-brocade; 534 x 115 cms.
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

21,22 **Islamic prayer-mat** (detail: *'Allah'*)
Cotton, dye-painted, block and
screen-printed; 213 x 590 cms.
Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh





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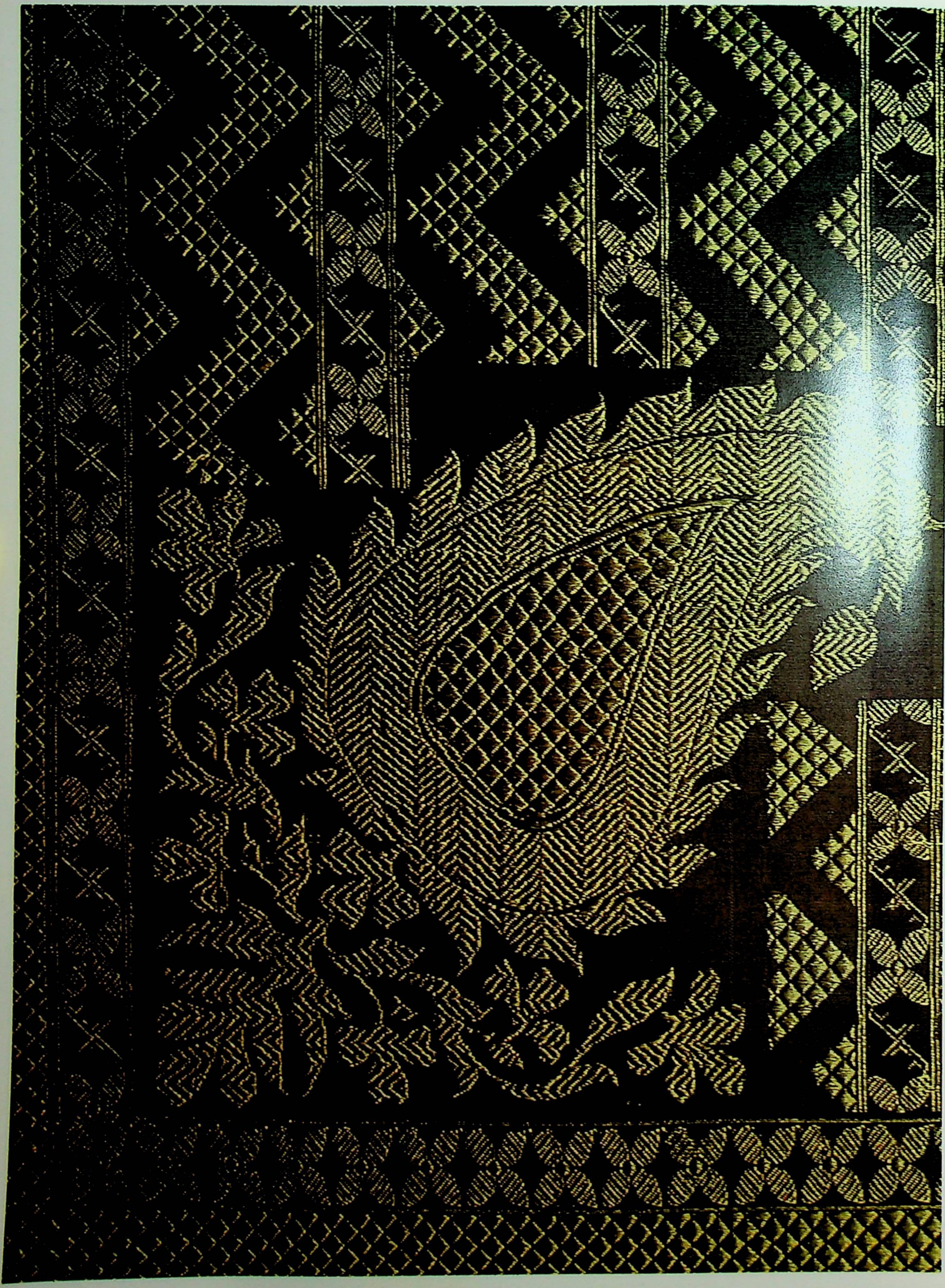
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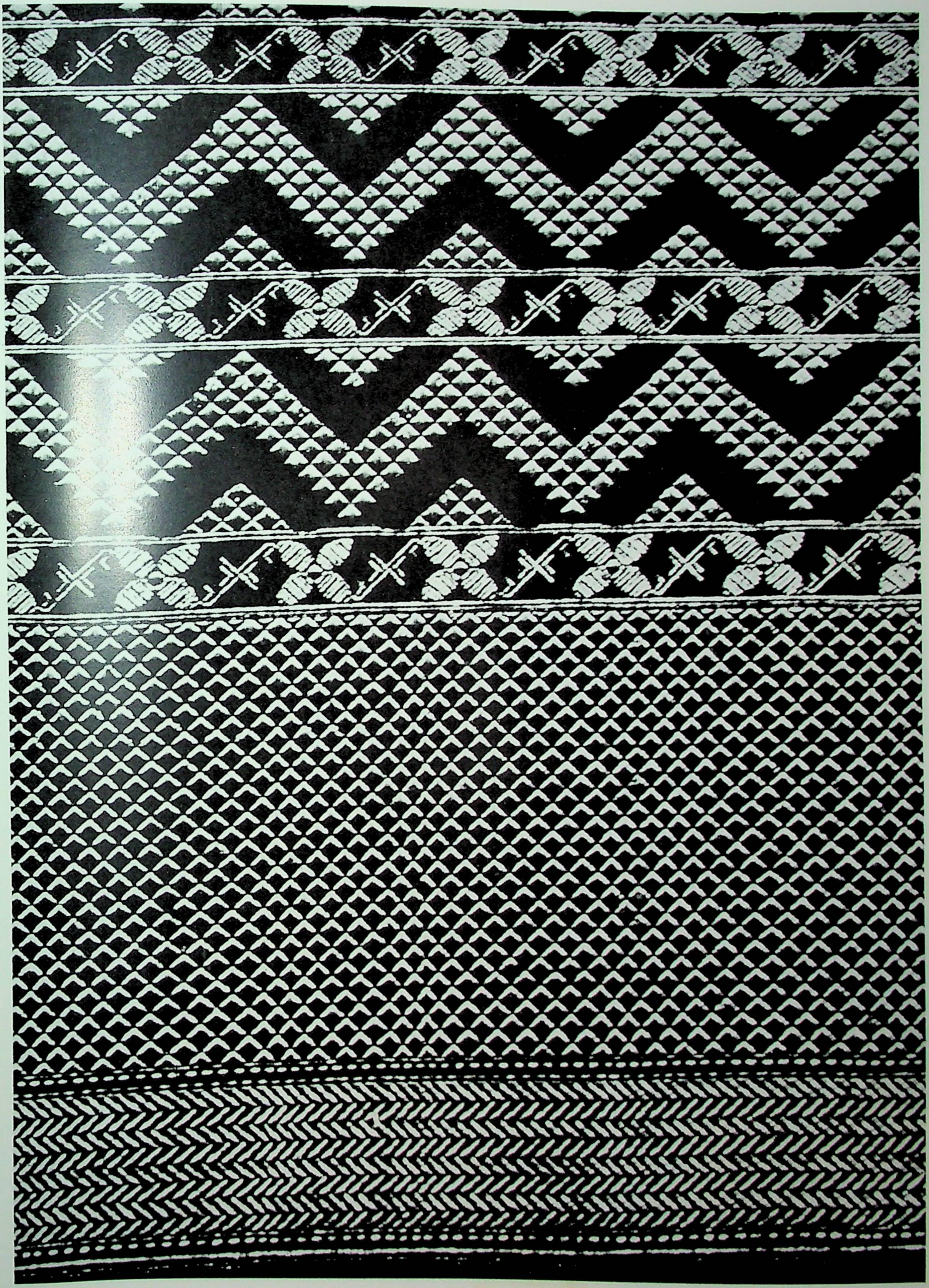
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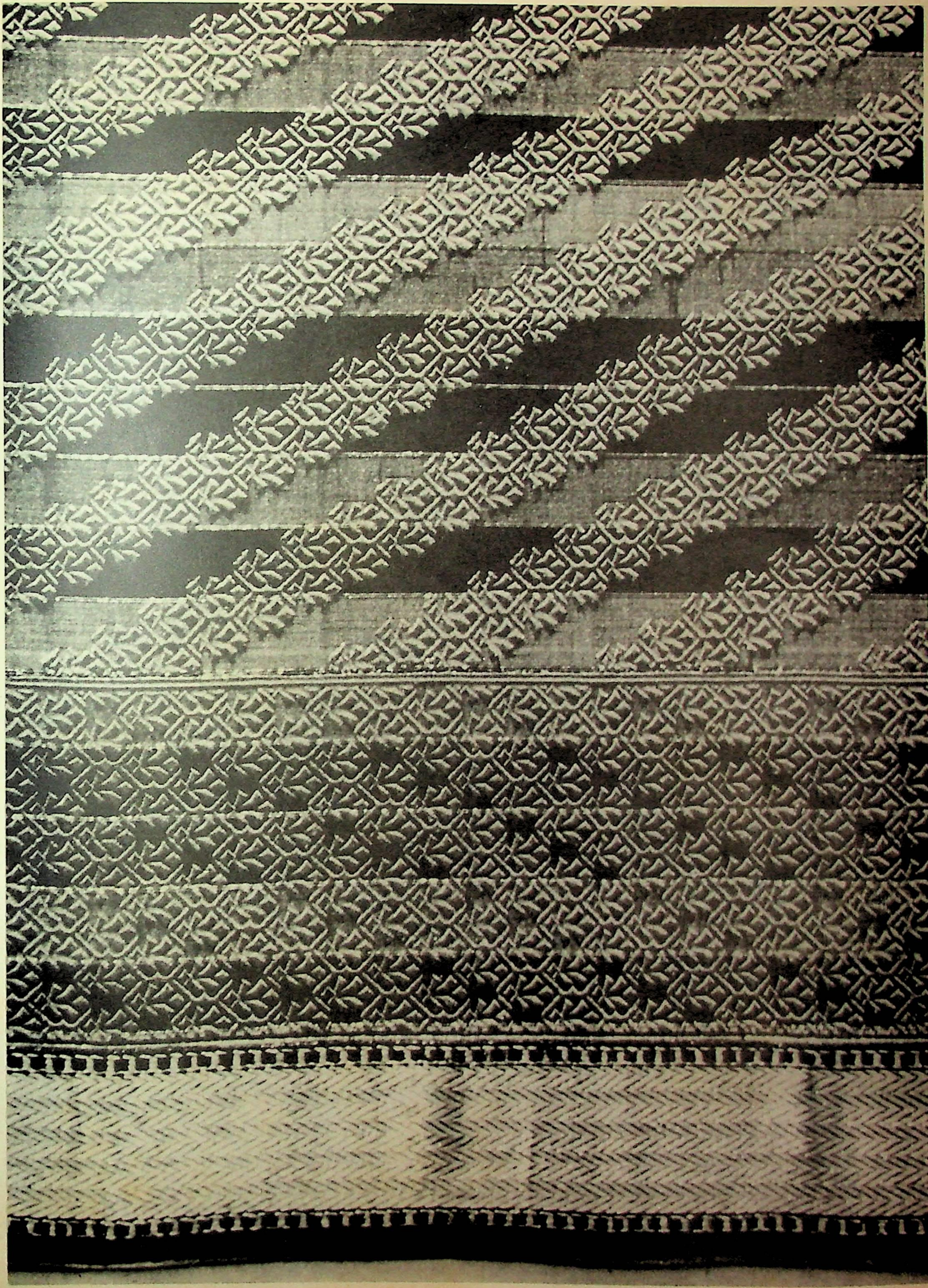




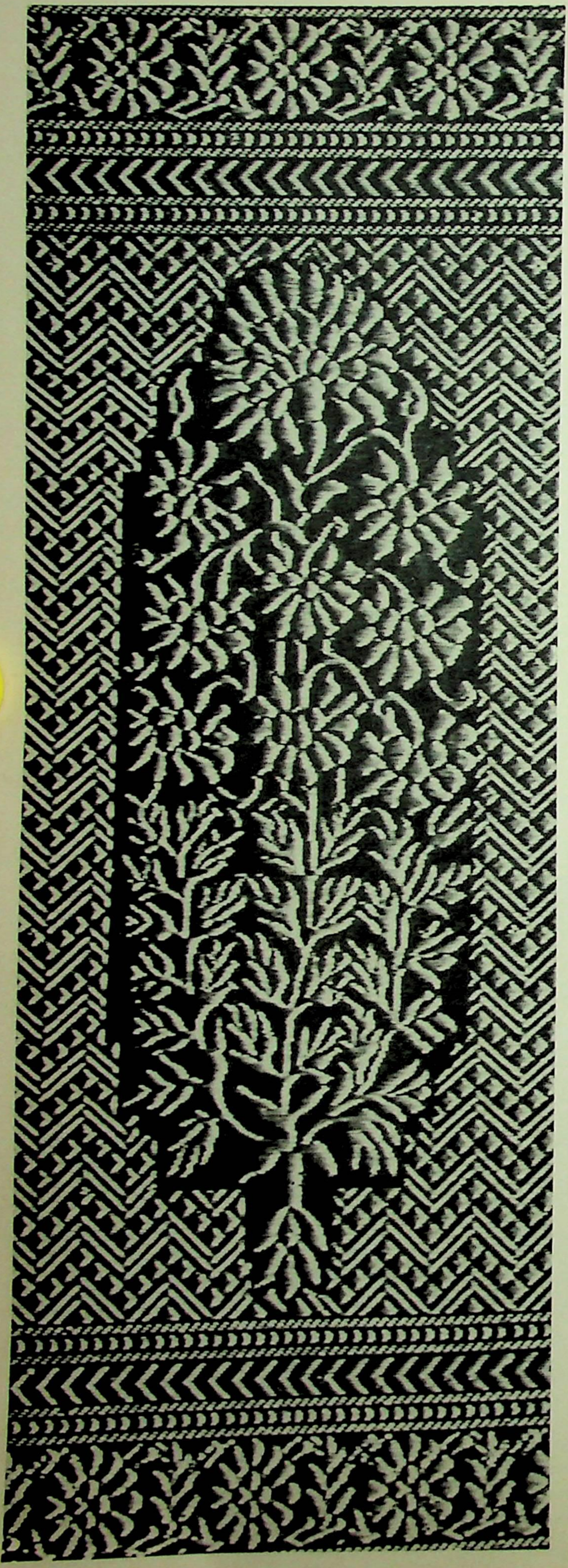
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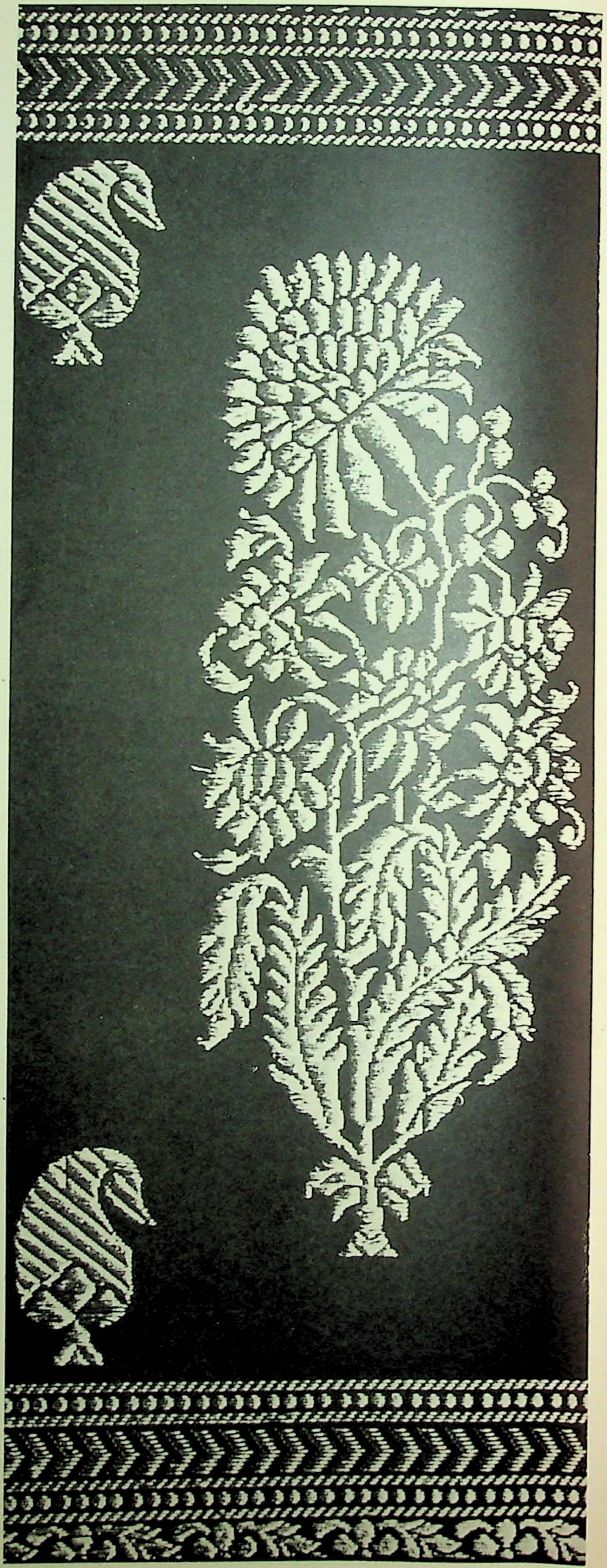
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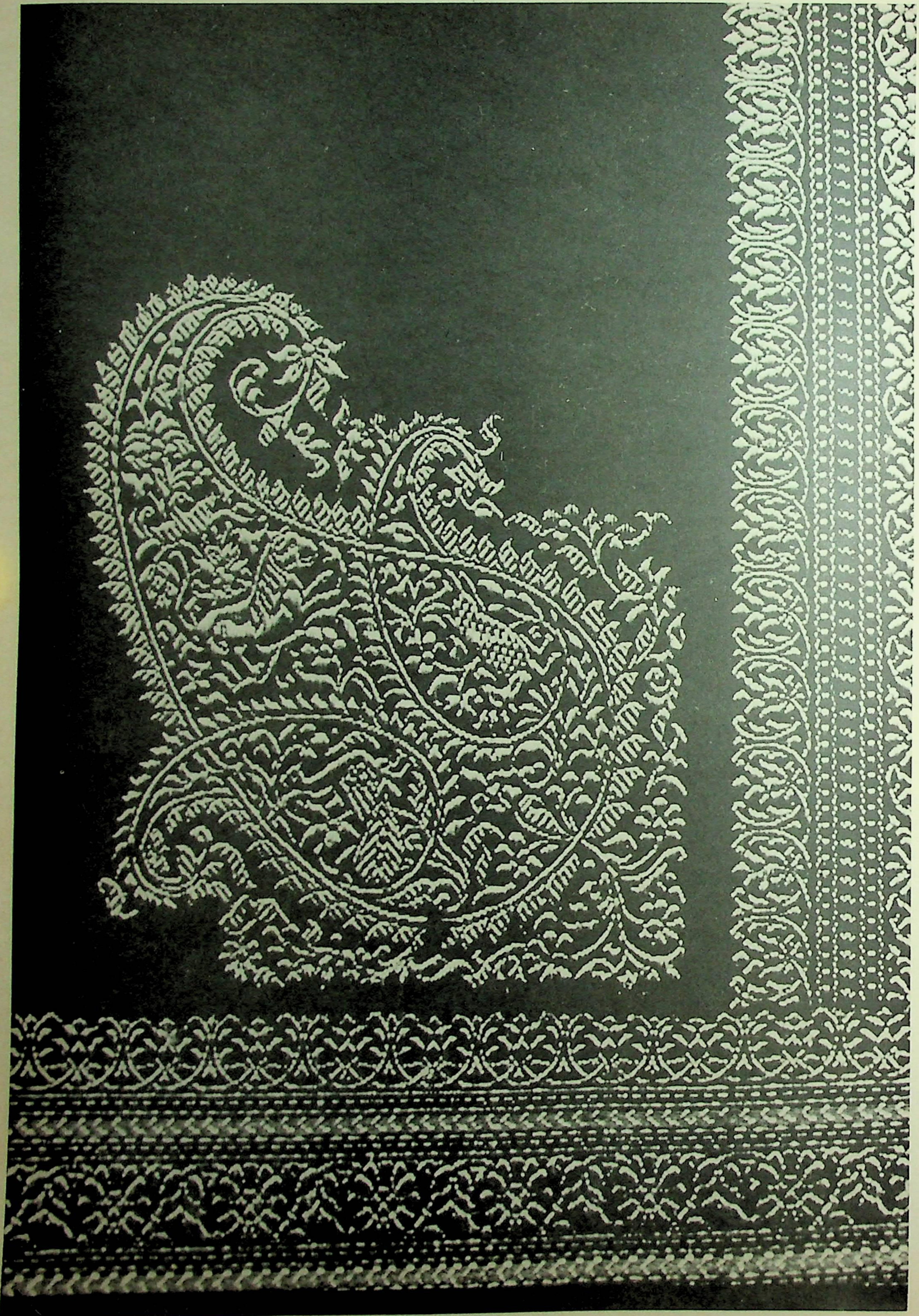
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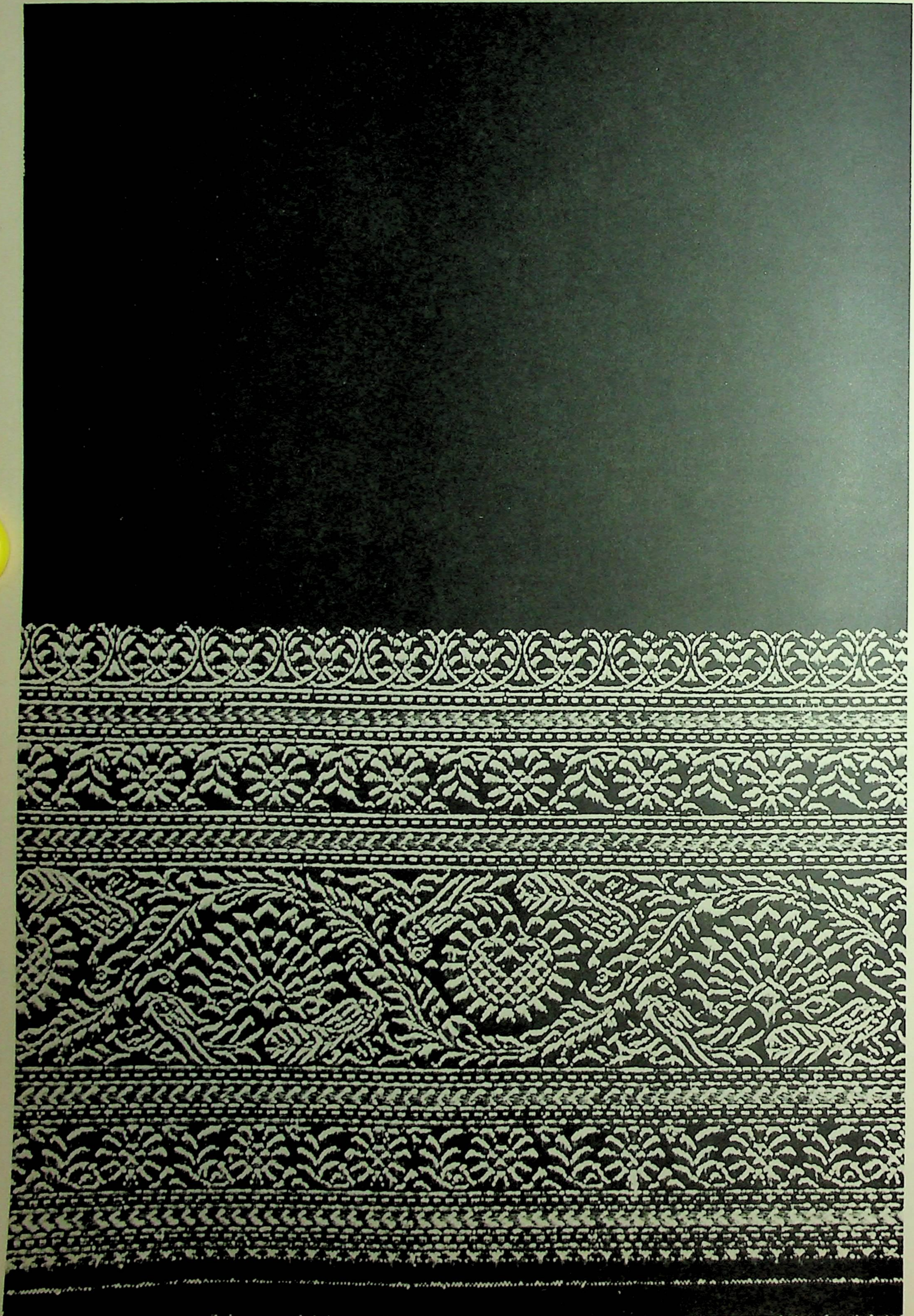
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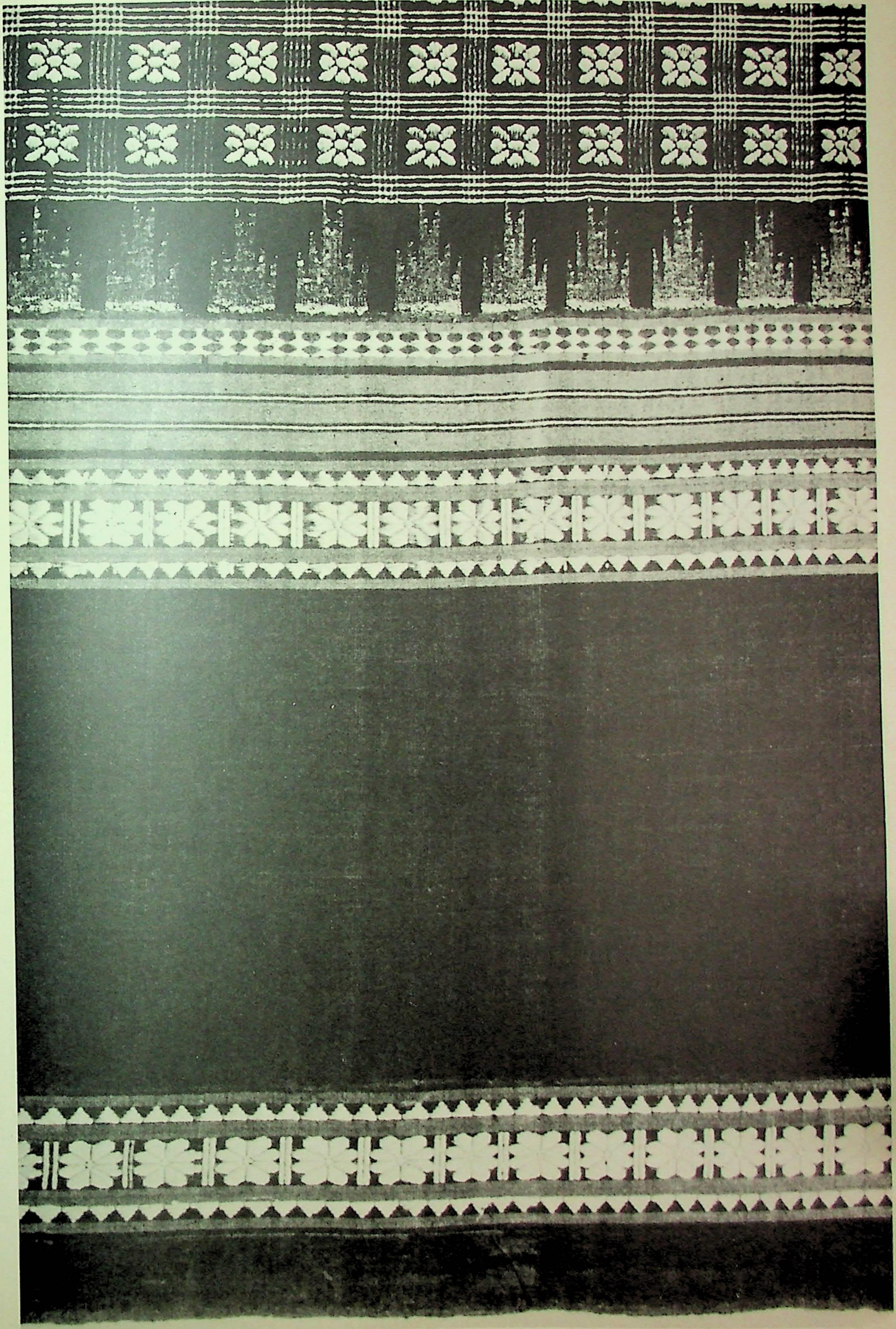
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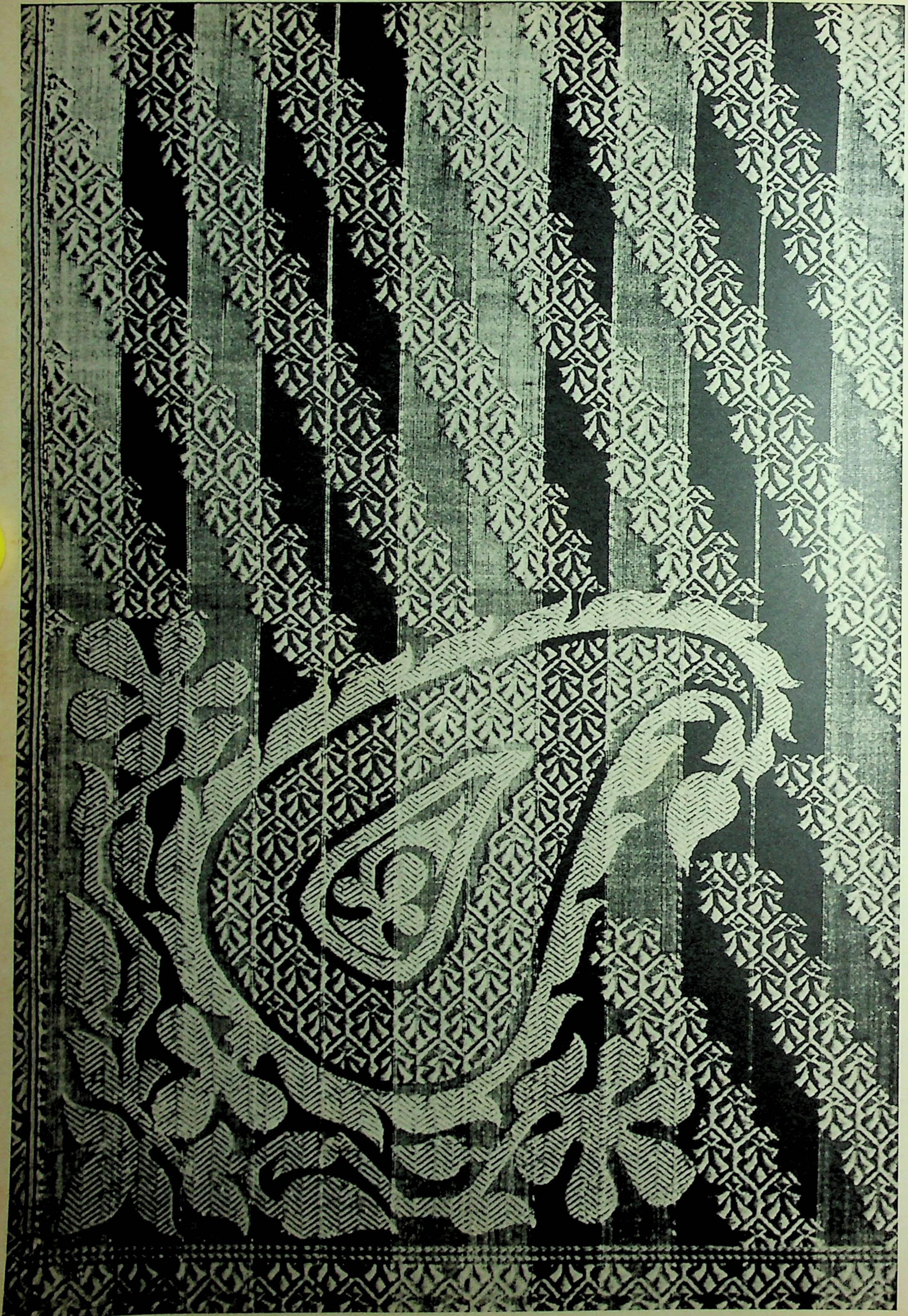
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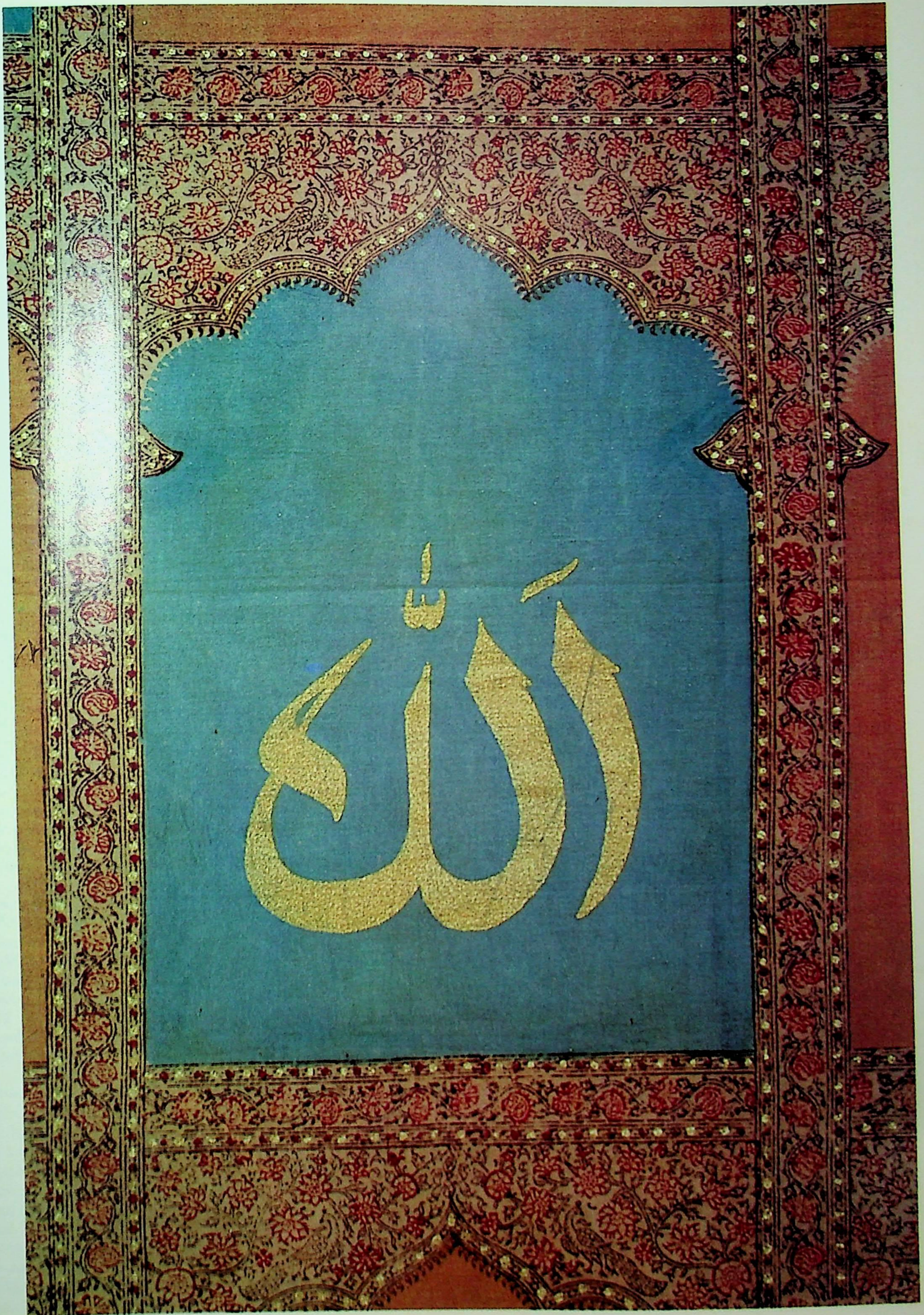


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Ganjifa
The Playing Cards of India



▲ Krishna: ***Dashavatara*** **set**

▶ **Maharana Sangram Singh playing cards in camp at night** (detail)
c. 1720-5, Udaipur
42.3 x 69 cms.
Felton Bequest 1980
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

▼ **Ganjifa players in Maharashtra** (after H. Venkatarama, 1885)
Mishraskanda Brihadjyotisharnava



Many theories have been put forward about the origin of playing cards and claims have been made from many a country as their birth place. In the literature of playing cards, which is now 275 years old, several countries of Europe and Asia have been assigned the honour of having devised this ingenious instrument for the exercise of the mental powers of deduction and combination as well as of the all-too-human proclivity to tempt Dame Fortune.

Ganjifa, in its several forms of spelling, is a word signifying playing cards or card games in India and Nepal, Iran, some Arab countries and Turkey. As far as we know, it occurs for the first time in Yusuf ibn Taghri-Birdis's *Annals of Egypt and Syria,* where it is mentioned in the tale of an incident which must have happened between 1399 and 1412, probably in Damascus. A Mamluk officer, later to become Sultan, played *kanjafah* or *kanjifah* with his fellow officers and won a large sum of money. There is good reason to believe that this brave Mamluk was gambling at cards, because the same word *kanjafah* appears in an inscription on a card of a famous Mamluk set.

The etymology and origins of the word *ganjifa* are obscure. *Ganj* is a Persian word meaning "treasure, treasury or hoard, (later) granary". According to some scholars, the actual form of the word *ganjifah* or *ganjafeh* is neither Iranian nor Arabic nor Turkish but probably an adapted or corrupted form of unknown antecedents. Although its derivation from *ganj* is not fully established, there is one important factor in favour of it: in all the card systems there is always one money suit named after a coin of local currency, such as *dirham* (*drachma,* Mamluk), *denari* (Italian), *ashrafi* (gold coin) and *tanka* (silver coin) in Iranian packs. Similarly, in the Indian Mughal *ganjifa* the two suits called *safed* (white, silver) and *surkh* (red, gold), which the popular imagination later identified with the moon and the sun, respectively, can also be shown to have represented money.

The game of eight-suited *ganjifa* was popular in Persia under Shah Abbas I (1587-1628), but it disappeared in Iran after its suppression by the more orthodox Shah Abbas II (1642-1667). The popular game in the eighteenth century and later was *As-Nas,* possibly an imported poker-like game. The main development of *ganjifa* and the cards with which it was played appears to have taken place in India.

Playing cards and the games played with them probably came to India with the first Mughals from their ancestral homeland. In June 1527, Babar, the Mughal conqueror of northern India, says in his diary: "The night we left Agra, Mir Ali the armourer was sent to Shah Hasan (Arghun) in Tatta to take him playing cards (*ganjifa*) he much liked and had asked for." We do not know, of course, what kind of *ganjifa* cards Babar sent to his friend in Sindh, but it was quite possibly an eight-suited pack. His daughter, Begum



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▲ *Ramayana* Ganjpa
19th or 20th century, Sonepur, Orissa; Cotton fabric, starched, painted and lacquered; 4.2 cms. diam.

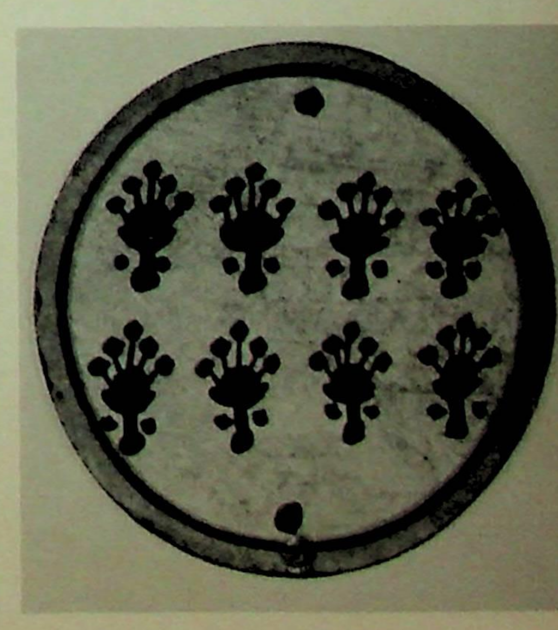
▶ *Dashavatara* Ganjifa
c. 1977, Puri, Orissa; Cotton tissue, starched, painted and lacquered; 6.5 cms. diam.

▼ Mughal Ganjifa
c. 1977, Dandoshahi, Orissa; Cotton tissue, starched, painted and lacquered; 6.5 cms. diam.

◀ *Ramayana* Ganjifa
19th century, Parlakhemundi, Orissa
Cotton tissue, starched, painted and lacquered; 9.5 cms. diam.









▲ **Mughal Ganjifa**
c. 1865, Kashmir
Papier-mâché, painted and lacquered; 5.2 cms. diam.

▼ **Box with sliding lid with raised ledge**
c. 1850, Nirmal, Andhra Pradesh
Wood, painted and lacquered; 7.3 x 14.6 x 7.3 cms.



Gulbadan, the sister of Babar's successor, Humayun, records that "Many amusing games, full of fun, were played".

By the sixteenth century several different types of *ganjifa* games had already been developed in India. We learn this from the chapter on the games played by Akbar the Great, which his wazir and biographer, Abul Fazl, included in the *Ain-i-Akbari,* a book on the institutions and activities of the imperial court. The intriguing part of Abul Fazl's narrative is his account of two kinds of packs of cards: "This is a well-known game (*ganjifa*). His Majesty has made some alterations in the cards. Ancient sages took the number twelve as the basis and made the suits to consist of twelve cards (*waraq*); but they forgot that the twelve kings (*amirs*) should be of twelve different kinds. His Majesty plays with a new version". A neatly tabulated description of a twelve-suited and an eight-suited pack with all the details of court cards and suit signs are provided by Abul Fazl.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, card playing must have become an accepted and very popular pastime at the innumerable Indian courts, from the imperial court in Delhi to the places and houses of sultans, nawabs, subahdars, rajas, jagirdars and their vassals and retainers. We must not forget the zenana (women's apartments) where *ganjifa* was played as a relief from "institutional boredom". Poets and philosophers wrote about the *ganjifa,* artists made beautiful cards, and at first the ruling classes and then the lower orders played *ganjifa* games with various types of cards.

The classic Mughal *ganjifa* with ninety-six cards and the standard eight-suits spread all over India, but apparently never reached the deep south of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The game was carried along by the spread of Mughal culture, penetrating both different regions and new social strata. The Deccan, with its intermingling northern and southern and Muslim and Hindu cultures, became perhaps the most fertile region for the development of a great variety of cards and games.

The Hinduization of *ganjifa* themes must have contributed greatly to the spread and popularity of the game. We do not know when and where the ten-suited *dashavatara ganjifa* originated, but the Deccan in the seventeenth century would be a very good guess. *Dashavatara ganjifa,* with the *avataras* (incarnations) of Vishnu presiding over the ten suits, was the popular card game in Rajasthan, Bengal, Nepal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka.

These two systems of the *ganjifa* became popular in India—the Mughal system and the Hinduized *dashavatara* system. The Mughal *ganjifa* consisted of the standard eight-suited *ganjifa* pack and it was introduced into India during the early Mughal period. Indian writers refer to the game and it's rulers as 'mughal' or 'moglai'. A pack of Mughal *ganjifa* consists of ninety-six cards in eight suits of twelve cards each. The eight suits are probably a duplication of a pack of four, as the two money suits (gold and silver) indicate. Of the twelve cards of each suit two are court or figure cards and ten are numerals or pip cards.

The structure and rules of play of both the games are essentially the same. However, the structure of the *dashavatara ganjifa* is modified in two ways. Firstly, the number of suits and cards have been increased to make the game more complex; and, secondly, figures and suit signs familiar to Hindu players have been introduced. The pack has ten suits, each of which represents one of the incarnations of Vishnu. In accordance with the usual tendency to proliferate, the Orissan pack has expanded to twelve suits by the addition of a *Ganesha* and a *Skanda* suit, and to sixteen and twenty suits by the addition of further divinities.

The Maharashtrian Brahmins had taken to the game with great enthusiasm and treated its rule in a number of philosophically embroidered works. Different sorts of eight-, nine-, ten-, and twelve-suited *ganjifas* with a Hindu content were attempted such as the *dikapala* (eight regions), *navagraha* (nine planets), *rashi* (twelve signs of the zodiac) and Ramayana *ganjifas,* of which only the last named survives in Orissa today.

Krishnaraja III Wodeyar of Mysore (1794-1868) brought about a great revival in the art of *ganjifa.* In the last chapter of his monumental encyclopaedic work, the *Tatwanidhi,* the numerous packs of cards invented by the ruler and his artists have been described in great detail. The *chadda* games with upto 360 cards in a pack were very complicated, each suit presided over by the various gods and goddesses of the south Indian pantheon.

The traditional *ganjifa* cards were handmade and hand-painted, each single card being a work of art, modest or ambitious, but always a work of art. As the demand for playing cards grew and spread from the aristocratic mansions to the homes of commoners in city and village, groups of *chitrakars* (painter-craftsmen) in numerous centres took up the challenge and produced cards in diverse styles catering to every local taste. Two styles of cards generally prevailed, the *darbar* and the *bazar,* the former made by artists for the rulers and nobility and the latter for a less affluent clientele by craftsmen in many regional centres. The range in quality and size was wide and the lively counterplay between patron and artist-artisans led to experimentation which in turn resulted in new variations and themes.

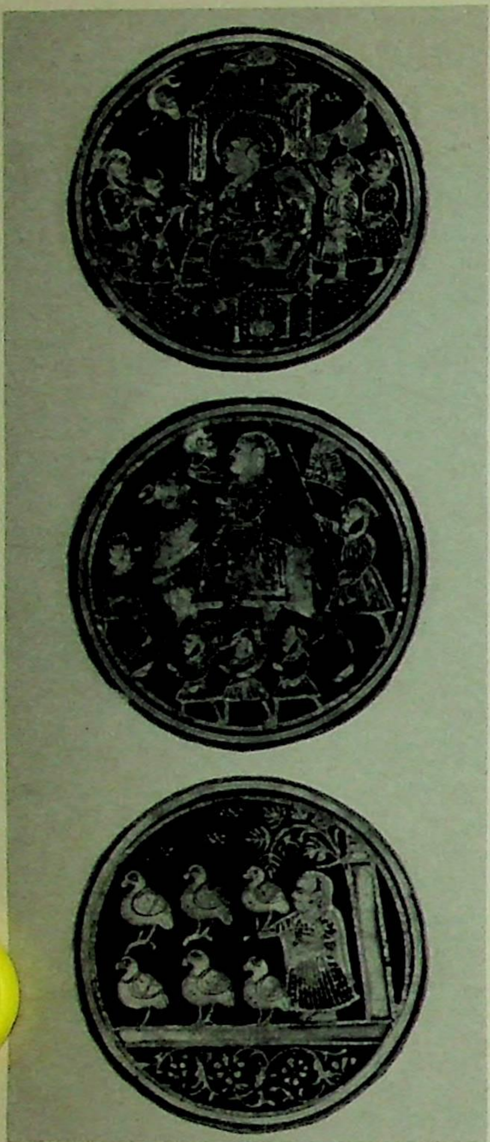
There were certain *chitrakar* families who under the patronage of local mahants or rajas specialised in the making of these cards. The process of making *ganjifa* cards was laborious and it involved all members of a family. Generally pieces of cloth or rags were glued, layered, stretched, dried and primed with an extract of tamarind seeds and coated with lime, burnished with stone several times till a smooth surface was obtained and the *pata* ready. Roundels were cut from the sheets with the help of templates and scissors and then the colours were laid on in several stages; finally the senior most artist would draw with a fine brush the black outlines and details of the figure cards, their eyes, hair, mustaches and ornaments; junior artists would draw the pip cards.

The Indian playing cards were packed in painted boxes whose beauty often matched that of the cards within. The cards were usually circular in shape and their backs painted in plain colours. Occasionally the backs were painted with a rim line or a small central flower. Fully ornamented backs were only found in expensive cards and these had no tell-tale irregularities. The rich or *darbar* cards were made of ivory, tortoise-shell, mother-of-pearl and even inlaid or enamelled precious metals. The *bazar* cards were made of paper, fabric, papier-mâché, leather, fish scales and stylographed palm leaf.

With the coming of European colonists, the Portuguese in the sixteenth century and later the English and the French, the *ganjifa* gradually fell into disuse. European traders, administrators and soldiers brought their own cards and games and Indian artists soon produced the European type of cards in the Indian manner. At the same time, some foreigners took an interest in Indian card games and collected the *ganjifa* cards which are now found in many Western collections.

In the nineteenth century the Europeans introduced printed cards featuring stylized figures of French kings, queens and knights which became very popular. Handpainted cards or *ganjifas* were too expensive for players of average means. As a result, the *ganjifa chitrakars* have passed almost into oblivion. The ganjifa is on its way to becoming an antique, simply a collector's item. Perhaps with their great artistic heritage behind them, Indian designers may one day accept the challenge of creating playing cards of popular appeal in the image of their own country.

Rudolf von Leyden







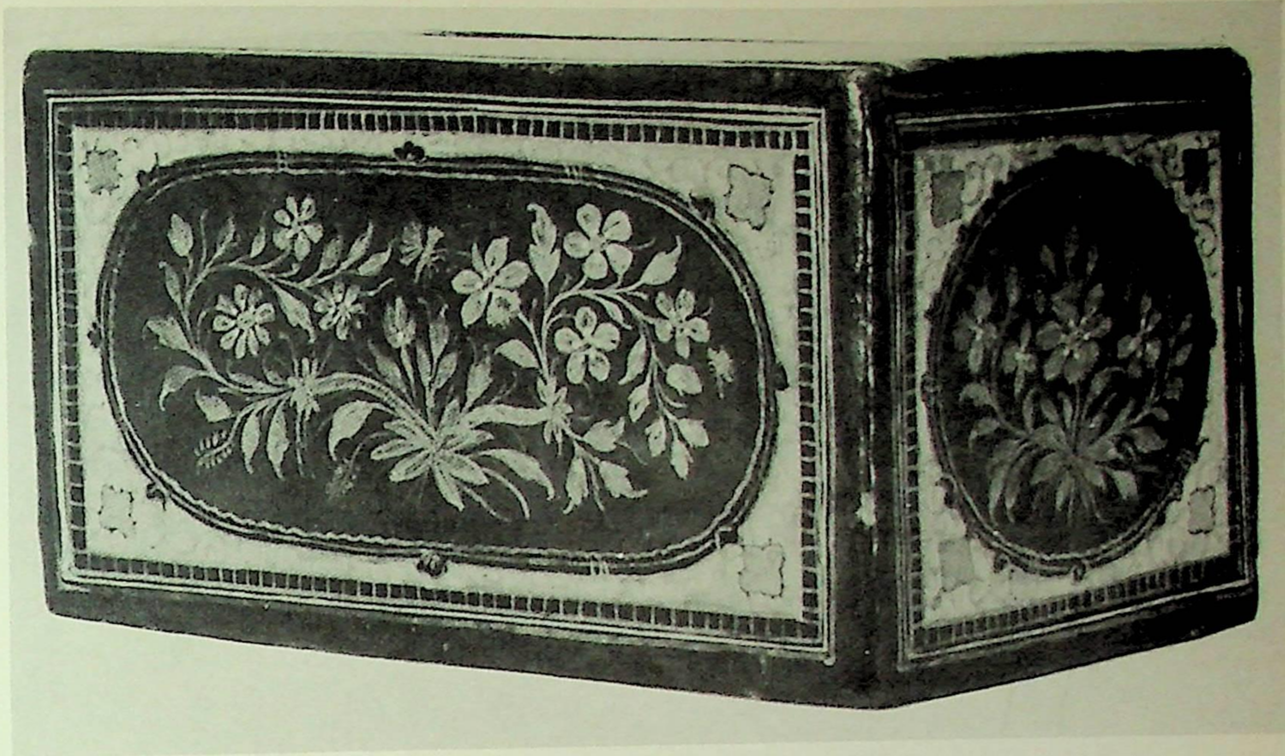
▲ **Mughal Ganjifa** (bird version)
c. 1860, Karauli, Rajasthan
Paper board, painted and lacquered; 3.9 cms. diam.

● **Mughal Ganjifa** (bird version)
19th century, Karauli, Rajasthan
Paper, painted and lacquered; 4.6 cms. diam.

▶ ***Dashavatara*** **Ganjifa**
19th century, Rajasthan
Paper, painted and lacquered; 5.1 cms. diam.

▼ ***Dashavatara*** **Ganjifa**
19th century, Jaipur, Rajasthan
Engraved brass; 6.0 cms. diam.

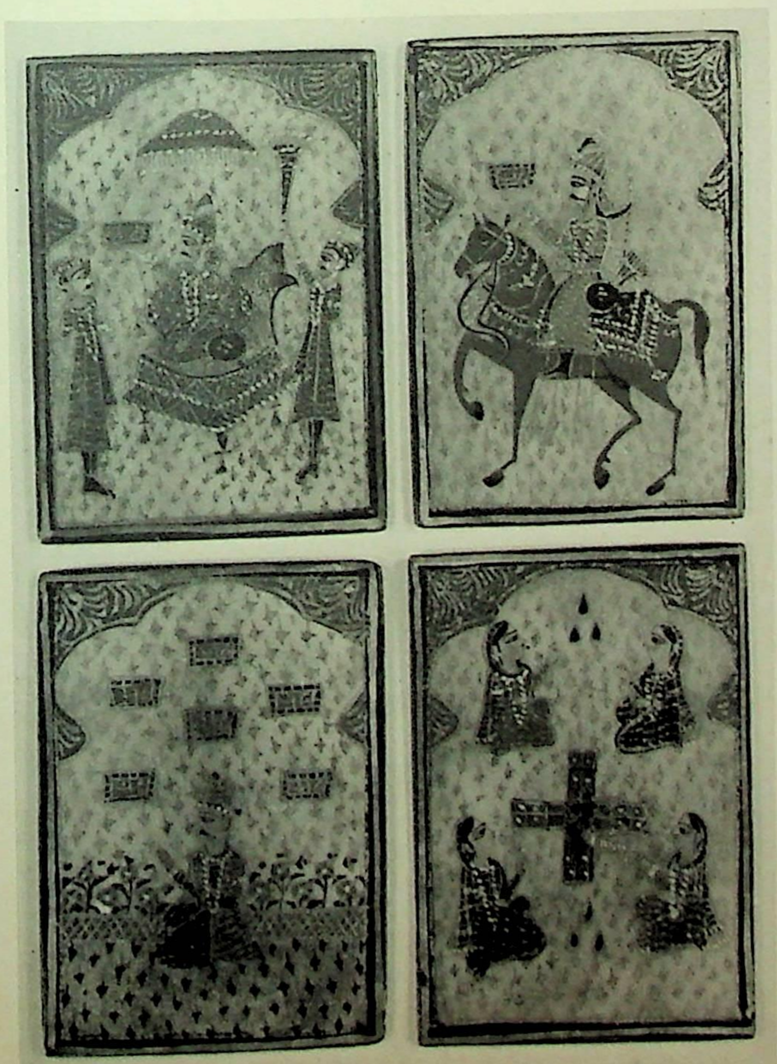




▲ **Box with sliding grooved lid**
19th century (3rd quarter), Karauli, Rajasthan
Wood, painted and lacquered; 8.8 x 14.6 x 8.3 cms.

▼ **Mughal Ganjifa**
19th century, Rajasthan
Ivory, painted and varnished; 6.0 x 4.2 cms.

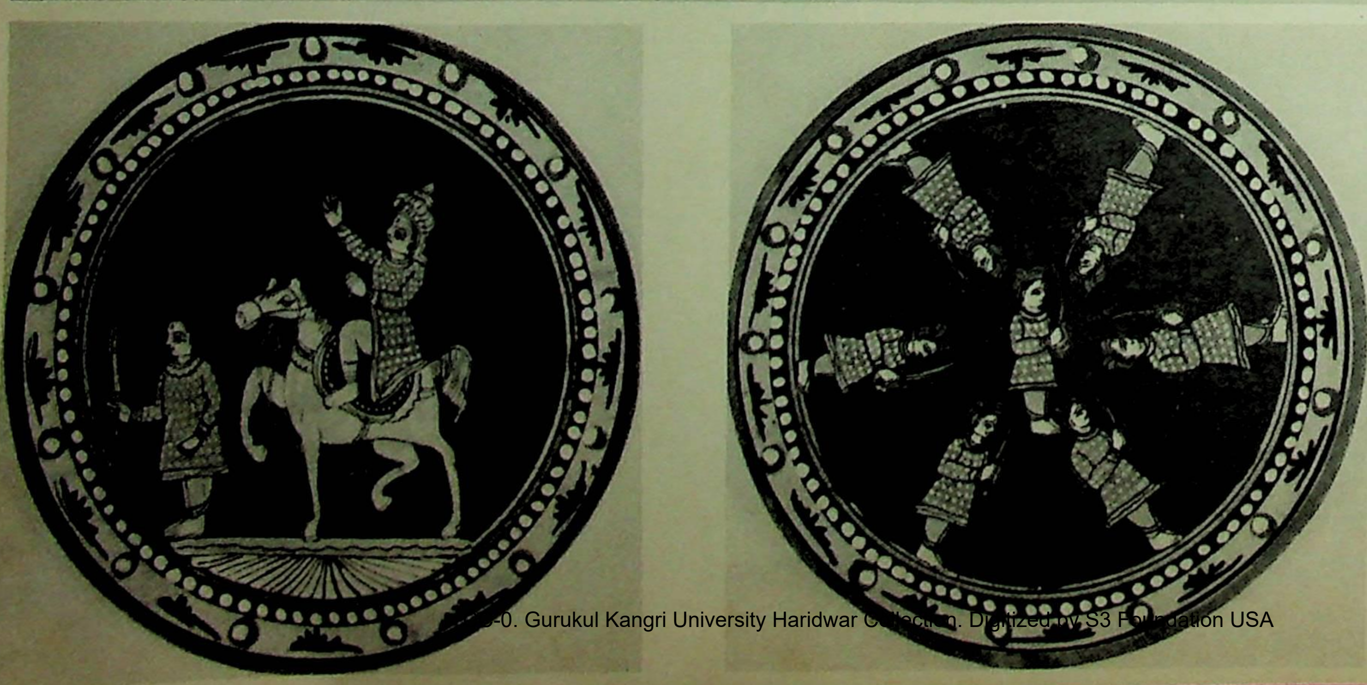
▶ **Mughal Ganjifa**
19th century (3rd quarter), Karauli, Rajasthan
Paper board, painted and lacquered; 6.0 cms. diam.



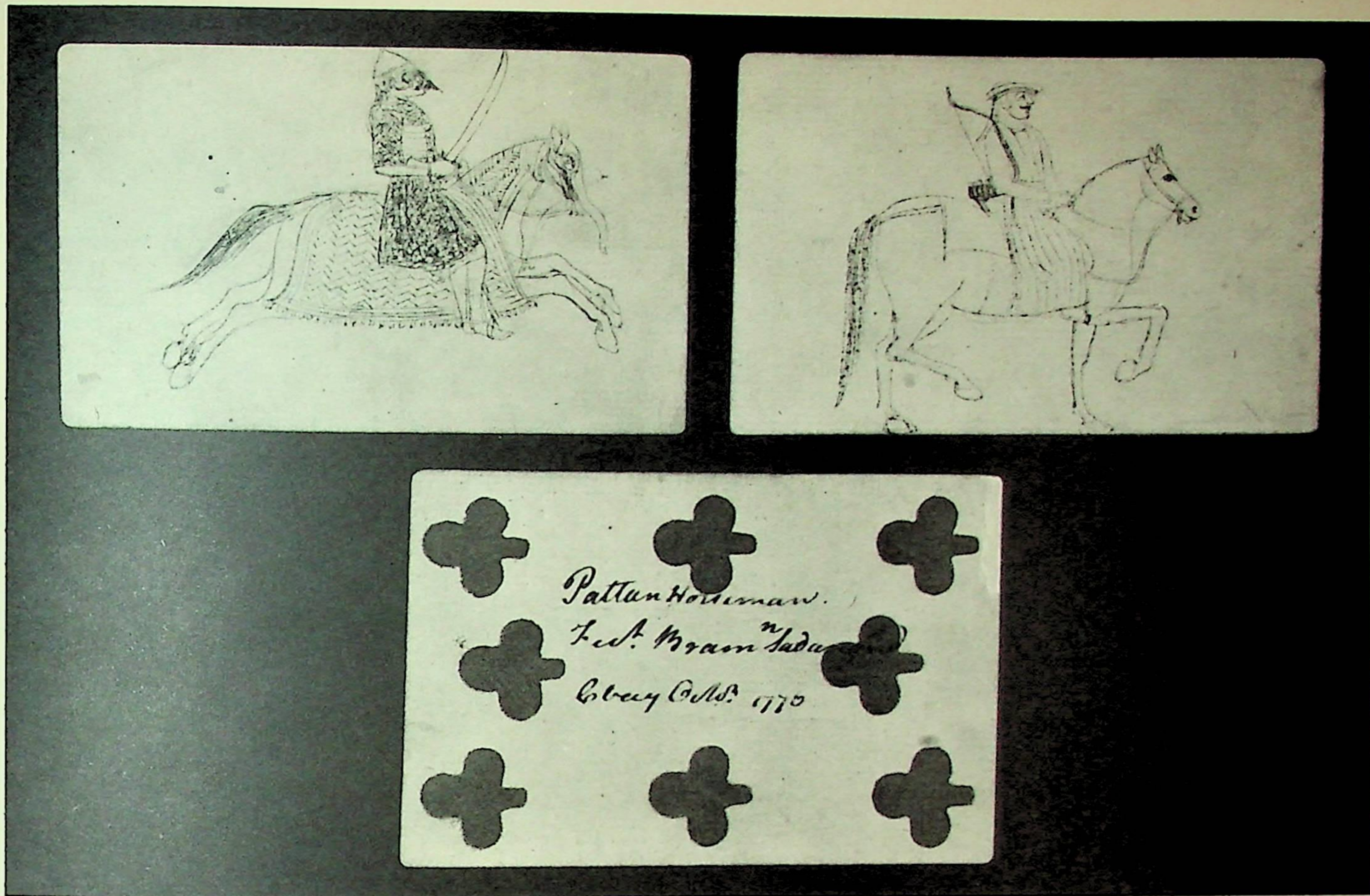




◀ Indo-French whist pack
Mid-19th century, Sawantwadi, Maharashtra
Paper, painted and lacquered; 10.7 x 7.7 cms.
(with rounded corners)



◀ Mughal Ganjifa
c. 1978, Sawantwadi, Maharashtra
Paper, painted and lacquered
8.0 cms. diam.



▲ **English playing cards**
1776-84, Cambay, Gujarat; Printed with captions in ink on the face side and ink drawings and water-colours on the reverse; 9.3 x 6.3 cms.

▼ **Illustrated cards** (Bhavanagar State·Historical Picture Series)
Late 19th century, British manufacture; Art card, glazed, gold-edged, rounded corners, printed in four-colour letterpress; 8.9 x 6.3 cms.



▶ *Dashavatara* Ganjifa (*darchitri* type)
Before 1867, Sawantwadi, Maharashtra
Paper, painted and lacquered; 11.2 cms. diam.

▼ Box with sliding lid and tongue
Before 1867, Sawantwadi, Maharashtra
Wood, paper-covered, painted and lacquered; 12.5 x 13.5 x 12.5 cms.





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The Indian perception of the Universe through 2000 years of painting and sculpture
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Aditi
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Courtesy, Lance Dane assisted by Jyoti Rath: Pages 96-99

Six Indian Painters
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Courtesy, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi: Pages 103-104, 106, 107
Courtesy, M. F. Husain; Photo, Saryu Doshi: Page 105 (Fig. 4)
Courtesy, K. G. Subramanyan: Page 105 (Fig. 5)
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Contemporary Indian Art
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Courtesy, Geeta Kapur: Pages 110 (Fig. 3), [illegible], 114 (Fig. 12), 117 (Fig. 20)
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The Living Arts of India
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Inside an Indian Village
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The Master Weavers
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Ganjifa
The Playing Cards of India
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Contributors

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Dr. Linda Leach has worked in the Cleveland Museum of Art and catalogued the Chester Beatty Library collection of about 3000 Indian miniatures. Curator for the paintings in the Hayward exhibition, she is writing a book on *Ramayana* paintings.

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Dr. Mildred Archer, formerly in charge of the Prints and Drawings Section of the India Office Library, 1954-80, has written books on the I.O.L.S. collection of British Drawings, Natural History Drawings, Company Drawings, Popular Paintings and Miniatures.

Jeremiah P. Losty, Assistant Keeper, Sanskrit Collection of the Department of Oriental Manuscripts, British Library, specialises in early Indian miniature painting and is author of the Festival publication, *The Art of the Book in India*.

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Rajeev Sethi, well-known design and art projects consultant, has been involved in the setting up of a major arts and cultural complex in New Delhi. He is also interested in the theatre and in painting.

Geeta Kapur was a commissioner for the Festival of India exhibition on Contemporary Indian Art. She has participated in various seminars and has contributed articles to journals.

Ebrahim Alkazi, the Director of the National School of Drama and Asian Theatre Institute for the past 16 years, has been closely associated with the contemporary art and theatre movement in India since the 1940s.

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Colin Ford, who was formerly with the National Film Archives, is now the Keeper of Britain's new National Museum of Photography. Intensely interested in the history of photography, he has broadcast, lectured and organised exhibitions on the subject.

Haku Shah is a known figure in the field of handicrafts and has written and lectured on the subject in India and abroad. He has designed an exhibition on the terracottas and potteries of India for the Handicrafts Board.

Dr. Jyotindra Jain has received his doctorate in Cultural Anthropology and his publications include *Art and Culture of Rural Gujarat* and *Jaina Iconography* (with E. Fisher).

Dr. Rudolf von Leyden was actively involved in Indian art and culture, and organised exhibitions for modern Indian artists, musicians and dancers. He was co-editor of Marg for a decade. His interest in playing cards, especially in the *Ganjifa* cards of India, is well-

